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of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

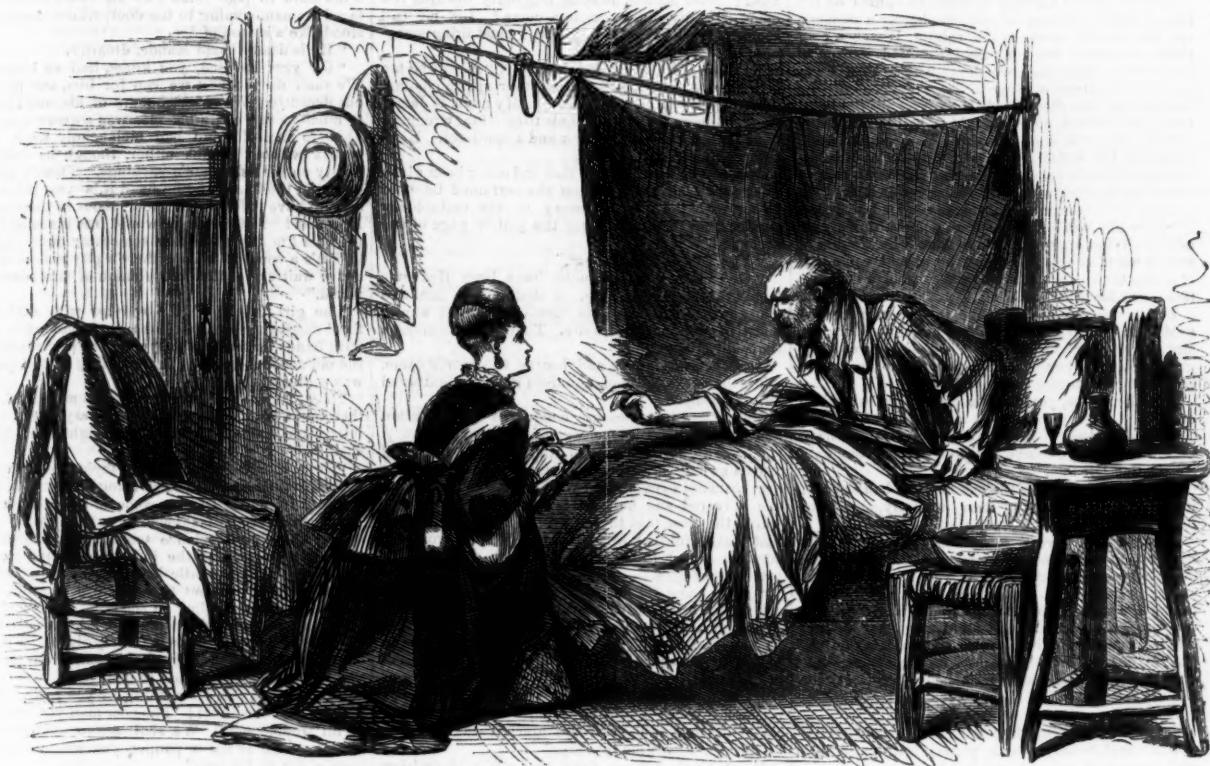
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[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 349.—VOL. XIV.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JANUARY 8, 1870.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



EMERALD AND RUBY,

WITH A
DIAMOND HEART.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Golden Apple," "Miss Arlingcourt's Will," &c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE heavens were one smile of sunny blue, the waters a sparkling line of leaping green, pearl-created as the breakers leaped upon the rocky point, but with only a foamy, silver rim where they lapsed softly upon the white sands.

"A perfect day," said one and another pleased visitor, nodding gaily from the barouche or beach phæton, or forth from the shade of silken parasols, to chance acquaintance, met amidst the increasing crowd which had gathered early to watch the full of the tide.

For the broad, open beach was not without fame, and further back, behind the ridge of splintered boulders, peeped forth the roofs and chimneys of many a fashionable resort. Quite a cavalcade was winding forth from the tortuous road, which crept in and out, over rocks, between great cliffs, around ugly chasms, and linked together the green upland and the silver sands of the beach. Vehicles of all sorts, and a motley assemblage of human beings—from the great banker of the metropolis, sitting back among the velvet cushions of his richly appointed equipage, to the keen-faced gipsy woman, plodding down from the cliff where the dirty tents of her tribe were pitched, with her basket of gay bead-work poised on her head. And it is possible that the sweet and tender lesson of the scene, the blue benignity of sky, the grand repose of the billows amidst their very swell and upsurging, might have held as much meaning for one as for the other. But there were other souls quick to thrill in response to the subtle witchery of such a scene.

"Oh, what a beautiful world this is!" cried a sweet young voice from the open barouche that led the long line of stately carriages which brought forth

from the fashionable hotels the *crème de la crème* of their aristocratic guests.

And a fresh and girlish face, by no means lacking the charms which belong to early maidenhood, was upturned enthusiastically, first to catch the warm bath of golden sunshine, and then to be refreshed by the invigorating breath of the sea.

"Very beautiful, Maude," answered a gentle voice. But the lady who spoke allowed a low, fluttering sigh, and a pathetic wistfulness in her soft gray eye, to belie the smile which had responded brightly to the young girl's eagerness.

"Brightness and warmth, freshness and sparkle everywhere," resumed Maude. "It is such a glorious thing to be alive in such a world."

"To be alive, and to be young, and innocent, and glad-hearted," responded a deeper voice. "Ah, my little Maude, you carry with yourself everywhere the magic talisman which transforms all things into beauty and healthy enjoyment."

And the fine-looking gentleman bent a proud and tender glance upon the fair young face.

"Ah, but, papa, is it not beautiful everywhere for you also? Don't spoil the gleefulness that springs up within me, while this air and sun and scene give me an intoxicating draught, rarer and more ethereal than any wine, by hinting that maturer experience, closer knowledge will show me a poison under the sparkling beading, a serpent coiled beneath the flowers, treachery and ruin hiding beneath the sea. No, no! I must not believe it. This earth is still a paradise."

"Keep the happy belief while you may, my darling," returned the father, tenderly, while a grave cloud dropped its shadow over his face; "and yet remember it is earth and not heaven, and therefore one must not count too strongly upon sunshine and calm."

He looked off as he spoke, out towards the far line where blue sky and blue-green wave blended into one purple haze, but before that his eye had met the momentary glance of the mild-eyed woman who sat beside his daughter on the seat opposite. A faint

flush crept over her face; there was just a momentary tremor of the close-pressed lips, and then, leaning on her arm and shading her eyes with one hand, she also looked off, far off towards the open sea.

Maude, dreamy with very excess of enjoyment, like a bird drowsy with sunshine, drooped her pretty head, and only looked at the sparkling of the water.

"I do not see," she spoke, presently, "why I may not always enjoy the brightness, and store enough to last when the days are cloudy and dark, just as the little bees do with their honey, and so keep the golden heart of the summer always with them. May I not, aunt Elise?"

"Heaven send you may, little Maude!" returned lady, fervently, stretching out her delicate hand to clasp fondly the little fluttering fingers resting on her lap.

"And so may you and papa, and all of us. I am fairly running over with my childish joy and glee. I think I will leave you to ride on the beach without me. I am in just the mood for climbing up the cliffs to my favourite seat there in the niche of the great Black Rock. I shall see you when you return."

"You won't stray beyond?" said her father.

"Not out of sight of the carriage route," she returned, gaily, rising from her seat as the carriage was brought to a standstill, in obedience to the master's signal.

Aunt Elise opened the delicate lilac sunshade for her. Mr. Kyrle himself descended and assisted her to alight, and both followed her with glances of tender solicitude, as the girl mounted up the winding path. She paused half-way up the ascent to look back with a playful smile, and to flutter her lace handkerchief gaily to the slowly moving carriage.

And then, still with that joyous smile on her face, the youthful heiress of the wealthy merchant made her way upwards, and perched herself in a natural seat hollowed in the great rock by the ceaseless action of storm-beaten water.

She sat there smiling, now and then rippling out into some light ejaculation or delicious sigh, as a kitten purrs sleepily, or a bird trills brokenly from

very excess of joy, paying little attention to the brilliant troop moving swiftly on the silver sands of the lower beach, but watching every change of sea or sky. She rose presently, glanced towards a hut or cabin perched still higher up, and stood a moment irresolutely, but finally seemed drawn towards it by some attraction too powerful to be resisted by her languid mood.

"My old fisherman is not taking his sun-bath to-day," she murmured. "I am sorry, for I fancied this sunshine must bring a smile even to his melancholy face."

And she picked her way daintily, and stood on the craggy height, looking down triumphantly a moment, ere she turned towards the cabin. It was poor place, certainly. Miss Kyrie, the petted darling of a luxurious home, had wondered before how it was possible for a human being to live there contentedly. But she had also discovered that it was not the bareness, and poverty, and want which had left that sorrowful, weary look on the owner's face; for once, when she had delicately managed to leave a bank-note on the rude bench where the fisherman was so often found sitting alone, he had given it back, with a dimly-veiled sneer at its uselessness for his need.

"Poor old man! He has some secret trouble, certainly. What pity that there should be trouble in such a world as this! I wish he would come out. It seems to me that this sky must hold a benediction, even for him."

But no one was visible. She took a step nearer, gazing, half in eager expectation, half in idle curiosity, at the closed door, when the sound of a heavy groan fell upon her ear. She hesitated no longer, but went close to the door.

A hollow voice, yet wild in pitiful appeal, called out:

"Who is there? In the name of Heaven, have pity and come in! Give a dying wretch the only consolation left him."

Maude Kyrie's face blanched, and her hand shook, but she pushed open the door promptly, and went in.

It was a long, narrow room, dimly revealed by the light which could struggle through the small windows, whose diminutive panes were dim with dust and cobwebs, and the prolonged absence of a house-keeper's careful hand—meagrely furnished with a few wooden chairs, a single table, a small stove, and a narrow cot bedstead. It was to this last that the girl's eyes turned, and blanched at the sight of the writhing, twisting form stretched there; at the ghastly face, the wild, glazed eyes, rolling fiercely, which met her view.

Trembling in every limb with that nervous agitation natural to any young person introduced into such a scene, Maude reached the bedside.

"You are sick, and alone! This is terrible. What can I do for you before I go for help?"

Those glittering, glazing eyes searched over her face. The ghastly lips tried to smile.

"It is the pretty wench who talked with me. I remember you. Thank God you have come!"

"You are very ill, you are in great pain," she said, looking around, and then hastily pouring out some water from a pitcher on the table, and bringing the mug brimming full. "Let me moisten your lips. They look so dry and parched. It is shocking that you have no one here; you must have a doctor."

"All the doctors in the world cannot save me," groaned he, as his head fell back helplessly. "I am dying."

The tragic despair of the tone, the solemn meaning of the words, fell upon a shuddering ear. Maude Kyrie clasped her hands, turned marble pale, and sinking down on her knees, exclaimed mournfully:

"Oh, it is terrible! terrible! What can I do for you?"

"You can grant my sole remaining wish. You can give me all the consolation left me," he returned, with a groan, and a sharp, catching sob between the words.

Maude watched him sorrowfully with a growing awe; for that terrible, unmistakable look grew more and more distinct upon his pallid face—the solemn look which is the seal of death.

"Tell me what it is," she murmured, faintly.

"Don't look so frightened, poor child. If only I can relieve my guilty conscience, I shall not be afraid or grieved to lay down this life of mine. It has been weary, weary enough, and somehow, because my mother was so good, and loved her son so well, because she prayed always for me, I do not fear what is beyond. She is waiting there for me, and a good man told me once that the All-Merciful forgives true penitents, and I—I have repented in dust and ashes. But I must not waste my breath. Another spasm like that I had before I heard your steps may come any moment, and it will take me off. I know it will take me off. I want you to write down my dying confession, and to witness that it is the truth. Can you

find anything to write with? There is an account-book on the table, and you may tear out the leaves that are written on."

His calmness had some effect in soothing the girl's tremor. She found the book, and disengaged her own gold-set pencil case from her *chatelaine*, and knelt down again before the bed.

A paroxysm of terrible pain coming on, delayed his speech. He could only writh, and gasp, and pant.

"Oh, let me go for a doctor! Don't try to talk, but let me find something to relieve such terrible distress!" cried Maude, looking longingly towards the door. "Why don't someone come? Let me call someone from the beach. Indeed, I must bring someone."

"No, no," he answered, hoarsely, "it will be too late then, I know. I feel another spasm coming. Write down what I say, quickly. My name is James Long. I have been guilty of abetting a foul wrong. I have helped to shield a forger and a murderer. Have you written that?"

Maude's delicate fingers, that had never been given to sterner task than writing the perfumed billets or idling with the dainty tracery of the embroidery needle, moved swiftly over the yellow page of the account-book.

"Yes, I have written that."

"God bless you! It must have been Heaven's mercy that sent you here. I shall speak fast, and every word will have its meaning. Don't hinder me with questions, but write. There is little enough time—little enough!"

And then fast, thick, and hoarse the words came, while the great beads of agonised suffering gathered on his forehead.

Maude had in a measure conquered her agitation and terror. With a true woman's tender sympathy, she gave all her thoughts to him, and her white hand moved swiftly as the words came. More than once her beautiful eyes dilated with consternation; twice she shivered and half started back, but it was towards the close that the pen dropped from her fingers, that that awful look of anguish, as of some wounded creature, struck in the very heart by a cruel shaft, came to her eyes.

"What name did you say? No, no; not that!" she asked, in a voice of pitiful entreaty.

But he, holding down the agony of pain, drifting so surely and swiftly down to the dark shore of the unknown sea, could not perceive the personal interest in the appeal.

"The same, write it plain and sure, that the world may know what a whitened sepulchre has been the shrine of its worship. Curse him! it was his wily tempting that led me into sin."

Maude Kyrie turned away that white, despairing face of hers, lest even his glazed eyes should read what it betrayed, but her fingers moved steadily.

"Is it written, all written?" asked he, gasping between the syllables.

"It is all written," she answered, huskily.

"Then put your pen into my fingers and lay my hand on the right place. I cannot see—everything is blurred, but Heaven will leave me strength enough to sign my name so it can be read, and you must write yours as the witness."

"Yes," answered Maude Kyrie, and in a stony, mechanical way she put the book under his hand, and set the pen in the nerveless fingers, and with strangely fascinated eyes watched the feeble, irregular characters formed by the desperate resolve, with the last remnant of strength, which left below her own even characters the straggling but perfectly legible name of James Long.

He fell back when it was done, but motioned his further commands.

Shivering, Maude obeyed, and wrote her name beneath.

"Is it all done?" he asked.

"All done," answered the white lips of Maude.

An exultant smile crossed his face, but was swept off by the sudden convulsion of every feature. The strong will relaxing its strain, the terrible spasms regained control. Maude, thrusting the account-book into her pocket, rushed to the door, shrieking for help. A couple of women were just clambering down the cliff.

Her wild gesture brought them to the scene.

"The Lord save us all!" ejaculated one, as she looked in upon the agonising scene. "Poor Jim Long's hour has come this time! And it's the terrible cholera, or I'm mistaken. My man said he was poorly when he looked in yesterday. Poor soul! poor soul! Run, Martha, and get John over here, though I mistrust it is too late."

And as her command was obeyed promptly by her companion, she turned, in surprise not attempted to be hidden.

"Indeed, miss, it is a poor place for you. I can't think how you happened to come here."

"I was walking below; I heard his cry, and came in. Oh, it is terrible!" answered Maude, hiding her face in her hands and shuddering.

"Don't come in again. You look faint. It is natural that a young thing like you couldn't bear such a sight. Oh, poor creature—poor creature—how he suffers!"

But in a few moments more the racked body was beyond suffering. Before the assistance came, the poor creature's tortures were all ended.

"Don't stop here now. I'm sure it was very good in you—such kindness as people of your style don't often show to poor folks like us," said the kindly faced woman, coming to the door, where Maude still stood like a statue of ice.

"He is dead?" said Maude, drearily.

"Oh yes; he died, you know, half an hour ago. We shall do the best we can for him, and lay him out decently. We're neighbours of his, and friends, as much as any could be. He was a queer man, and kept to himself, and had melancholy ways. He wasn't without means either, though he lived so poorly on his fisherman's earnings. There's money of his in the bank, and he fixed it, a year and more ago, to have it left to the poor about in these parts. Poor Jim! I did hope he would free his mind sometime, for I'm sure there was something on it. Height-ho! it's a comfort to hope there's pity and mercy up above waiting for the poor sinners of this miserable world."

The girl had heard the speaker with wild eyes fixed intently upon the honest countenance, and with hands locked stealthily over the pocket wherein the old account-book, with its freshly written pages, was still resting.

"Yes, I must go, I must go," she murmured, and then burst into a passion of tears, crying out pitifully, "oh, I am so frightened, so frightened! What shall I do?"

"Poor child! go home, it is trying to anybody's nerves, let alone a soft young thing like you. Where are your friends? Did you come up from the beach? You are one of the fashionables at the hotel?"

And the shrewd glance took in the costliness of the girl's dress, and the indescribable and yet undeniable look of gentle breeding and aristocratic culture, which, without the elegance of attire, had pronounced her standing in society.

"Yes," faltered Maude, "my father's carriage is below. They were to wait for my signal. I ought to go, indeed I ought to go, but I cannot bear to leave yet. If I only know what to do!"

"Dear child, there is nothing for you to do. Bless you for a tender heart! The poor man yonder is out of all trouble now. We shall see to what is left to be done. He is not a pauper, you know. He will have a decent funeral."

But the girl still stood irresolute, the slender white fingers locked together in a pitiful way, the soft, dark eyes filled with trouble and bewilderment, the lips quivering like a grieved infant's.

"Tender little heart! It has been too much for you. You never saw anything of death before," continued the woman, compassionately; "it is always a great shock to such young things. But go home, and go to sleep, and you will soon forget it."

"Go to sleep?" repeated Maude Kyrie, glancing around with a shudder. "I don't feel as if I could ever again shut my eyes without seeing his dying face close to mine."

"Your mother will soothe you, dear. Go to her at once."

The girl glanced upwards to that dazzling sky.

"My mother is there—not here. But my aunt Eliza is like a mother," she murmured, and took a step forward out into the sunshine, "so like, that I have never missed my own."

And she only shivered again. The gay, glad-hearted creature, overflowing with the very joy of breath and life, who had bounded up the cliff so eagerly—could it be that this was the same? Was this Maude Kyrie, changed by a single hour's experience into such a frightened, agonised, heavy-hearted being? She asked it of herself pitifully as she descended slowly, like one suddenly aged.

She looked down at the diamond-glistening waves, up at the matchless blue of the sky, appealingly. Alack! there in her pocket, tangible enough, weighing heavily, was the book which contained the dying man's confession, signed by the last effort of his expiring strength.

"I must think—I must have time to think—before I decide upon anything with such terrible issues," murmured she, pressing her hands against her forehead.

At that moment she was aware of a reproachful voice calling from below.

"Maude! Maude! why do you not return? Do you not see that we are waiting for you?"

She descended slowly, though perceiving her father's extended hands beckoning for her below.

A single glance at her face, and he exclaimed, in alarm:

"What has happened to you, Maude? You are as white and as wild-eyed as a ghost."

And he gathered her into his arms, and looked in loving apprehension into the troubled eyes that seemed to avoid his.

"Oh, papa! don't question me. I have seen such a sight! I was with a poor creature, alone with him when he died—died horribly! Oh! I cannot help seeing his face now!"

And she buried her own on his shoulder, clinging to him and trembling in every limb.

"My sensitive little darling! I will not trouble you with any more questions. Let me take you to Aunt Elise. She will know how to comfort you, and soothe this nervous shock," he answered, restraining from adding to the mental excitement, which was so plainly revealed by the dilated eye and ashy cheek.

And he carried her to the carriage, spoke a few low words to the fair and pensive-looking lady, and set his daughter by her side with a low:

"There, darling Maude. Weep away your trouble upon Aunt Elise's faithful breast. Poor darling! The sparkle of this beautiful day has gone out very quickly for you."

The lady passed her arm around Maude, smoothed back the rumpled waves of brown hair from her temples, and only talked in low, caressing murmurs, as a mother does to her babe.

"My little birdling! it will not do to be too agonised over woes that cannot be helped. There, there, my darling; shut your eyes, and try not to think about it."

But all her soothing talk failed. The veins on the white temples showed more and more distinctly. The lips were more and more closely compressed, and the ashen circle around them took the deadly pallor that only comes from excessive nervous excitement. A shudder every now and then went quivering through her frame.

Thoroughly alarmed, the lady whispered to Mr. Kyle as they descended from the carriage at the hotel door.

"This is more than a slight indisposition. Send for a physician without adding to her alarm, if you can."

"I will go back to the cliff and find out what she saw," he returned. "It is plain that we cannot question her now, and to learn the cause is half the battle. I am utterly at a loss to imagine how any sight could induce a terror which even your soothing fails to calm."

Maude went passively to her chamber, and made no resistance when they removed her hat and mantle, but as the maid unfastened her dress, she started away, and the terror returned.

"You are to lie down, you know, Maude," said Aunt Elise, gently.

"But I need not remove my dress?"

"It will be much better. See how cold your arms are! And your feet, I have no doubt, are like ice. Please let us get you into a loose wrapper, dear."

She could hardly resist this appeal, but she rose up, herself removed the dress, and carried it to the closet, hanging it back as far as possible. She came out with downcast face, and surrendered herself to their hands, and was soon comfortably reposing on the couch with closed eyes.

"Falling asleep," Aunt Elise hoped, as she sat silently watching the stirless figure; but she found her mistake when she rose, and was noiselessly crossing the room. Then the white lids fluttered open instantly, and a pair of dilated, unnaturally brilliant eyes showed her that the girl's brain was still tortured by the mysterious trouble.

She judged it best to remain, and went to the door, to find the doctor there, and Mr. Kyle, with a grave face, and nervous lip, waiting in the dressing-room.

He drew her aside.

"Elise, the man is dead, and she was there, as she said, alone, until her screams at the last awful spasms, called two women—neighbours, it seems."

"It has given her a frightful shock. I was not aware that her nerves were so sensitive. I think the doctor must give her an anodyne. I will go—"

"Yes; but, Elise."

He paused, hesitatingly.

She looked up into his face, and then said quickly:

"You have not told me all, Arthur."

"No. Imagine my consternation at learning his name. It is Long—James Long, Elise, this man who lies dead!"

The pair stood a moment looking at each other with troubled eyes.

"Can he have said anything to her?" asked Mr. Kyle.

"He is dead?" repeated the woman, drawing one long breath of relief it was plain to see.

"Yes, he is dead. We have nothing more to fear

from him—unless—oh, Elise! do you see the trouble it will make if he has dared to talk to Maude?"

She passed her hand across her forehead.

"I think Maude would tell us if it were so. She has always been such a frank and innocent child. What more natural for her to come to us with any story of that sort?"

"True. And yet this excessive excitement?"

"I cannot help believing it solely the result of such a terrible sight as a painful deathbed. Remember how charily you have guarded her from every thing unpleasant and trying. No, I cannot believe there is anything more."

"Let us hope so. Besides, the woman assured us that the man was beyond speech—in violent spasms. Yes, it must be impossible. It is merely the shock of the scene. You remember she went away so full of life and gladness. My innocent darling! I trust an opiate and a night's sleep will remove it all. But I wish, how I wish this singular chance had not taken her there to see him—that man of all others!—to see him die!"

CHAPTER II.

SOME half dozen miles down the coast, but on that very shore, there stood a cosy dwelling, in which, on the very morning of Maude Kyle's agitating experience, occurred quite as touching and sorrowful a scene.

The house and grounds were something out of the common line in that vicinity, and merit a description, as they well-deserved the quaint name bestowed upon them by their wealthy and eccentric owner, Captain Mathew Nickerson—"The Happy Harbour." So indeed had it proved to the genial-hearted old shipmaster; and no pains or wealth had been spared to bring the place to that standard of perfection approved by his particular tastes and opinions.

The house was not a very spacious one, but was everything a family of ordinary numbers could ask. It stood upon the summit of a hill which commanded a fine view, not only of the harbour and the sweep of cultivated fields and woods for miles around, but of the outstretching sea, and the upper portion was built with a flat roof and verandahs, as other people build the lower story to give constant access and view of their cultivated lawns and gardens. Captain Mathew's choicest out-of-door picture was that which blended leaping water and bending sky, and his favourite seat was in the sort of open cupola which crowned the roof, and where a powerful marine glass rested on its supporting frame night and day.

Here those guests who had desire to please their whimsical host followed him promptly, and few there were who did not learn to be thrilled and awed by the grandness of the view, or to be touched by the faithful devotion of the old sailor to the ocean, which, as he repeatedly declared, had carried him safely so many scores of times, which had yielded him his munificent fortune, nor turned upon him, at the last, in treacherous fitness, but had been always a gracious and benignant mistress.

When the air was too cool to make this open upper-deck, as it was known in the household, agreeable to guests, Captain Mathew had another unique retreat where he dearly loved to welcome a few chosen friends.

"Come down to my cabin," was a welcome summons to the initiated.

For as the upper deck required one to mount to the roof, so the cabin took you to the lowest story. There it was, sure enough a perfect cabin, which opened upon you as you descended the steep, narrow companion-way, set with carved mahogany panels, with a silken rope hanging on either side to give support to gentler guests, who were apt to adore the cabin and its master both, especially when they emerged with some little treasure given as a pretty memento of the place, a rare shell maybe, a bit of coral of exquisite hue, some quaintly-carved fan; there was no end to the treasures stored in these wonderful lockers, and the most remarkable thing was that, while no new guest ever departed empty-handed, the store never became exhausted.

Possibly Mrs. Nickerson might have explained, but she never gave a hint of the numberless purses of gold that had accompanied his brother-ship-masters to various ports, since Captain Mathew's retirement to the "Happy Harbour," all with mysterious reference to the replenishment of those treasure lockers. Moreover, there was the young captain, Master Robert, as the "Happy Harbour" knew him. Captain Nickerson, as a certain gallant A No. 1 clipper, honoured and trusted him. Robert Nickerson, only son and sole heir of Captain Mathew's round fortune, and the darling treasure of the gentle Mrs. Nickerson's loving heart, knew very well that every voyage, while it afforded to its principal owner a short trip and prosperous, must also produce a chest well stored with pretty knick-knacks, such as fair ladies and curious children love to admire, all of

which vanished into the insatiable maw of the huge locker in the cabin, and came out as the well-preserved mementoes of Captain Mathew's first trip yonder, or his last cruise there.

Would there never be more hurtful deceptions! You would have found it impossible to persuade yourself that you were not rolling on some ocean wave, once shut into the cabin, with Captain Mathew sitting there at the table, talking over his voyages.

There was the cabin, a positive thing, built of staunch oak, with panels of mahogany. There were the ribs, the carlines; there swung the lamps. There was the transom, cushioned; there were the lockers innumerable; the state-room leading off—nothing wanting. On the table, which had its protecting ledge, the sextant lay ready for use, the dividers and pencil tray, even the well-thumbed Calculator, were close at hand; on the walls were spread the charts, marked off into courses that were the envy of brother mariners; and best, and most sea-like, there was Captain Mathew himself, hale and hearty, his very look invigorating and bracing as the salt sea air, his talk redolent of the quaint foreign flavour that one only gets on well-seasoned decks, far off in green water.

Moreover, the old seaman was not wanting in tact. He knew when to release a guest and save prolonging the cabin hospitalities until they grew monotonous and tiresome.

He was always the first to spring up, and say heartily:

"Well, I declare there's that consort of mine! It's high time she hailed, and invited us aboard her craft. Let's go and see what she is doing."

And a speedy emerging up into the handsome drawing-room, which was furnished with all the appliances of modern luxury and art, where crystal windows opened upon a verdurous lawn on one side, and a wilderness of garden blossoming on the other, was a new sensation; and few of the guests were ready to answer coherently, or to feel fairly awake from a charming dream, until the gentle voice of the kindly-hearted mistress had reiterated her words of welcome.

Now we have given a faint idea of the "Happy Harbour." Let us look in upon it at the breakfast hour.

The table is set in a pretty octagonal room, as daintily, with its snowy damask, its pearly china and glittering silver, as for a lady of fashion. One window is filled with flowers, and on the table beside either plate lies a tiny bouquet, one of violets, the other of rosebuds.

Mrs. Nickerson had been a romantic girl, or she had not married a sailor; and she kept much of sentiment yet in the heart, too full of kindness and happiness to be soured or chilled by age. It was her loving task to put the flowers by Captain Mathew's plate, and, when young master Robert was at home, she made a third bouquet, which it must be confessed was apt to be the handsomest. As if a mother's hand spared the creamiest calla, or the loveliest spray of ruby-coloured fuchsia, when the sailor boy was home from his voyage! It was the only thing she begrimed, this giving their only child to that dangerous life. When Captain Mathew sailed, she had shared his perils. The boy Robert was born on board his father's ship, while she lay at anchor in the beautiful Naples Bay. Alack! born on board a ship, cradled by its rocking, fanned by its sails, how could he help growing up with all the wild sailor-longings in his blood? So master Robert was ready to take command of the new ship when the old skipper retired. The ship was due in port now. How they had watched every floating rumour that had come back from the track in which it was steering. Only favourable news, though—fair winds, and a remarkably pleasant season.

"We shall have news of the Falcon to-day, consort," said Captain Mathew, rubbing his hands gleefully, while Mrs. Nickerson poured out his coffee. "It was howling wind all night, and a clear sky. They would bowl along ten knots, and more. I shall stay on the hurricane-deck and watch, this forenoon. Ten to one I shall see her skysails loom up before noon, without the glass."

"Heaven send you may!" echoed the mother, with a wistful sigh.

And as she passed the fragrant cup over to him, he perceived that the tender eyes held two beads of dew.

"Ho, ho! my old consort! you are getting chicken-hearted in your old age! That will never do—never do! I shall have to ship myself, and take you back to green water to bring back your courage. Pooh, pooh, Mercy! you'll have your boy sitting here by tea time."

But while he scolded in that blustering tone, Captain Mathew made very vigorous use of his hand-kerchief, as if he was the victim of a severe cold.

"Heaven grant it, dear! I'm sure it seems to me

I was never so homesick for him. I wish, Mathew, Robert would give up the sea now. I'm sure he would at a hint from you. We are getting into years, and Heaven has blessed your efforts with the most generous reward. We've more than enough for ourselves and Robert too. More than we shall all need."

"That's gospel truth, Mercy. Our locker holds supplies for the whole cruise," returned the captain, smiling, a little nervously perhaps, to help wink away the twinkling drop on his eyelash.

And then he nibbled at the slice of well-browned toast, which, with a tiny plate of salted codfish, shred into bits, was always put beside his plate, let the generous board hold what other dainty it might.

"Then there's no need of his going to sea; and to my eyes it's a tempting of Providence to send him."

"But do you want the brave lad turned into a helpless land-lubber, and idle driveller, eh? you silly, soft-hearted, old woman, who ought to be proud of that smart skipper, Robert!"

"I am proud of him, Mathew, but my love is stronger than my pride. We are growing old, and the house is lonely. I want Robert here. I want him to marry some of these bright-faced, gentle-hearted girls, who are so plentiful about us, to make this a Happy Harbour indeed, where we shall always hear gay young voices, and cooing laughter, and tiny, tripping feet. Just picture that, Captain Mathew, and then say if there's any sense in us two old people sitting here alone, and Robert off amidst the dangers and hardships of sea-life!"

"You're a clipper consort, an A No. 1; there's no rubbing it out. I've had it in my mind, too. Didn't the young dog throw sheep's-eyes to that merry-faced Rose Hawthorne when he was home? And don't that pearl ring on her finger mean something? I'll swear it is the one Robert bought of the Ceylon trader. I hinted about it, and she turned the colour of the jack the pirate hoists. Well, well, we will see to it. This shall be Robert's last voyage. I meant it all the time, only you've got ahead of my reckoning."

"Oh, Mathew! you make me so happy!" faltered the lady, setting down her cup, and stretching out her hand across the table.

"Avast there! and shouldn't I be thinking of making you happy? You that have sailed with me in fair winds and foul, over smooth seas, and amongst the cruellest breakers! Consort! consort! I'm a rough old sea-dog, but I've got a heart, and you and that brave boy are my best treasures. Shiver my timbers, if ever I forget that!"

And now Captain Mathew was driven to use the handkerchief openly, because the shower was quite beyond surreptitious management; but in the midst of his puffing and blowing he burst into a mellow laugh.

"What a couple of gulls we are, to be snivelling when we ought to be rejoicing! Robert will wake us up, I reckon! I say, let's hurry up with the rations, and go up to the hurricane-deck, and see who gets the first glimpse."

While he spoke there came an odd sound from above—odd to the uninitiated, but Captain Mathew leaped to his feet.

"Jack, you dog!" exclaimed he, "that tar-blown scamp has gone up and got the start of us, wife!"

"Ship ahoy!" came in stentorian tones from some distant passage. "Skipper of the Happy Harbour, ahoy! The Falcon is coming up the bay."

Captain Mathew threw down his napkin, Mrs. Nickerson dropped her egg-spoon, and both went hurrying, tumbling, scurrying up the two flights of stairs which led to the post of observation.

Jack Stone, the captain's valet and cabin-boy, united in one very wiry, weather-beaten person, was dancing like a mad Indian.

"She came up under cover of the steamer there, and her smoke hid the Falcon's rig from you. There she is, sir; you can make out her signal as plain as need be. She'll be up at the wharf before noon. Hurrah!"

"Hurrah, indeed, you scamp, snatching the good news out of my hands! Go below, and get a double allowance of grog, though. Ho! there's your Robert coming up in fine style, just as I told you. I'll run up the flag, and salute!"

And the old sea-captain capered about for joy, and set his eager hands to the halliards, and straightway up rose the bright flag, fluttering proudly from a slender staff which was secured to the upper roof.

"He sees it; our Robert sees it! You needn't think his glass isn't on the very spot. Put your eye to the glass and watch. You'll see him dip his colours in salute."

Mrs. Nickerson obeyed, but her blurred eyes would not perform the office. She stepped back to wipe them again and again, but the happy tears would come. "Look yourself, father," said she, half laughing, half sobbing. "It's no use for me to try."

"A silly old thing!" jeered Captain Mathew. "I'll let Robert laugh at you for that."

And he took possession himself of the powerful little talisman that brought the distant ship so close within his vision.

Presently he broke into a gay laugh, his eye still to the tube.

"Aye, they see the flag! There go her colours! Well done, Robert!"

But, in the midst of the broad smile, something seemed to freeze the old captain's face. His jaw dropped suddenly, a gray pallor thrust off the ruddy glow of his cheek. He took out his great Pongee handkerchief and rubbed vigorously at the glass, and then peered through eagerly, and with no more satisfaction, it seemed, than at first. But he turned his back upon the happy mother, and caught two or three hurried gasps of breath, like one suffocating beneath some heavy weight, and then dropped down into his chair, and stared off blankly towards the ship. Once he lifted up a deprecating, and yet reverent hand, as if pleading with that sky, smiling down upon them in such benignant brightness.

And then his face cleared, and he muttered, vehemently:

"What an old croaker I am!"

But anon the cloud dropped again, and between his set teeth he muttered, grimly:

"Half mast! Holy sailor! it has a meaning of some sort."

(To be continued.)

THE GOLD COINAGE.—The following tabular statement shows the Mint Weights and "Remedies" for Gold Coin as at present arranged:

Denomination.	Standard	Legal Max.	Legal Min.	Weight.	Remedy.	Weight.	Weight.	
	Grms.	Grms.	Grms.	Grms.	Grms.	Grms.	Grms.	
Sovereign	123	274	0	256	123	581	123	017
Half-sovereign	61	637	0	128	61	765	61	508

Practically, therefore, intrinsic and nominal value go hand in hand. The precise value of the sovereign and half-sovereign is known and recognised everywhere. To impair the weight would be to lessen the value of the coins, and to interfere with international and home traffic—as it seems to us—most injuriously. The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to cause each 40lb. weight of standard gold intrusted to the Mint for coinage to be cut not into 1,869, but 1,884 sovereigns and a fraction, and then assumes that each coin would pass current at an equal rate of value with that of its full-weighted predecessor! It is questionable whether any regulation, however stringently enforced, could confer an artificial value on the Lowe coin in our country. Abroad, no amount of moral suasion would produce the effect desired.

GOOD POWDER WASTED.—The practice of saluting by cannon is one against which we can arraign barbarity, absurdity, uselessness, unpleasantness, cost, and danger; whilst the only thing that can be said in its favour is that it sounds well, and to this we may, perhaps, be permitted to add what some folks say with reference to the bagpipes—the greater the distance the better the sound. With our land forces the amount of saluting has already been reduced to a minimum, and yet without abolishing the means of paying fitting compliments to other personages than members of the Royal family. Let our naval reformers in office take the matter in hand then. The ruling passion of the day, economy, can in this instance be gratified without incurring the necessity of dismissing any wretched clerks, or turning off any miserable workmen at a moment's notice. And the example once set in our own service will, we are sure, be speedily followed in all other fleets, so that eventually a mutual understanding may be established between all maritime powers by which the bang-banging which now takes place so constantly in naval ports and other places may be completely dispensed with, to the undoubted joy and benefit of all concerned. A great authority, we must remember, has left us strict injunctions to keep our powder dry. It is surely just as bad to waste it.

FOOD OF OCEANIC ANIMALS.—Plant life appears to be absent in the ocean, with the exception of a comparatively narrow fringe (known as the littoral and laminarian zones) which girds the coasts, and of the "Sargasso" tract in the Gulf of Mexico. During the recent exploration in H.M.S. Porcupine of part of the North Atlantic, not the slightest trace of any vegetable organism could be detected at a greater depth than 15 fathoms. Animal organisms of all kinds and sizes, living and dead, were everywhere abundant from the surface to the bottom; and it might at first be supposed that such constituted the only food of the oceanic animals which were observed, some of them being zoophagous, others sarcophagous, none phytophagous. But inasmuch as all animals are said to exhale carbonic acid gas, and on their death the same gas is given out by their decomposi-

tion, the question arises, whence do oceanic animals get that supply of carbon which terrestrial and littoral or shallow-water animals derive, directly or indirectly, from plants? Can any class of marine animals assimilate the carbon contained in the sea, or plants assimilate the carbon contained in the air? According to Mr. Jeffreys the usual theory that all animals ultimately depend for their nourishment on vegetable life seems not to be applicable to the main ocean, and consequently not to one-half of the earth's surface.

THE FUNCTIONS OF LEAVES.

IN a communication to the *Annales de Chimie et de Physique*, M. Boussingault asks a series of questions, and then details the investigations he has undertaken with the view to replying to them. 1. Do plants which so actively decompose carbonic acid in the direct light of the sun continue to do so in very feeble diffused light? 2. Does the decomposition continue under circumstances of total deprivation of light? This subject was to some extent investigated by Saussure, but was never quite satisfactorily determined. During the life of a plant the appearance of oxygen reveals the fact that the assimilation of carbon has taken place in its tissues.

In order to determine the presence of oxygen, M. Boussingault found phosphorus to be the best agent, since it betrayed the presence of the gas by the luminous vapours it gave off, even in the dark; and he found by experiment that the presence of the hypophosphoric acid fumes did not prevent sufficiently rigid leaves from performing their functions. To give one experiment: In a mixture formed of carbonic acid gas, 27 cent. cubes, and of hydrogen gas, 57 cent. cubes, a cylinder of phosphorus was introduced. The apparatus was then placed in a dark chamber, and a leaf of laurel was introduced into the bell-glass, presenting a surface of 60 square centimetres. The phosphorus became luminous for an instant, due obviously to the air adherent to the leaf.

The apparatus was now removed into the sunlight, and at once white vapours arose, proving that the leaf was producing and the phosphorus was absorbing oxygen gas. The mercury gradually rose for five hours. Analysis afterwards showed that all the carbonic acid had been removed, and that the plant had not ceased to perform its functions from any change in its structure occasioned by the acid.

Other experiments with the pine and other plants proved the same fact. Further investigations showed that in absolute darkness a leaf of laurel does not decompose carbonic acid, or rather, to state the facts ascertained more accurately, oxygen is not added to the gaseous mixture in which the experiment was made.

M. Boussingault found that leaves were capable of performing their functions, and of decomposing carbonic acid, in a very obscure light; and this is consonant with the well-known fact that in the dense forests of the tropics a beautiful vegetation is found where the light is so obscured by the masses of foliage above as to render it difficult, or impossible, to read even in the middle of the day. Additional experiments showed that leaves decompose carbonic acid at a very low temperature, and when exposed from direct sunlight. Seminal leaves, or cotyledonous leaves, yield no oxygen even on direct exposure to sunlight.

STRENGTH may be predicated of strength of material, of sense, of mind, or with the meaning of power to resist. Man may have the strength of a giant; in animals, there is that of the elephant; in trees, the oak; in metals, iron; among stones, flint. There is the strength of a number of men, or animals, even of rushes, as a bundle of rushes. The power to hold together is exemplified by the law of gravity, cohesive affinity. Weakness may display strength to overcome obstacles, as the placid air roused to a hurricane; the ocean, in a storm; or a spark of fire blown to a considerable flame. The strongest wood is made up of silken fibres; the hardest marble of pearl and almost atomic grains.

DAMAGES FOR A RAILWAY ACCIDENT.—At the Secondaries' Court, Guildhall, a writ of inquiry was gone into before Mr. Secondary Potter, to assess the amount of damages in an action brought by a young man named May against the London and Brighton Railway Company. Mr. Sergeant Parry and Mr. McLeod were counsel for the plaintiff, and Mr. Lopes, Q.C., appeared for the company. The plaintiff, who had lived with his uncle, a trainer of horses, at Sutton, was in a horsebox, with two valuable horses, attached to a train, on the 12th of May. When near Victoria Station, an engine ran into the train with considerable force, and the plaintiff sustained a fracture of the skull. The injuries he sustained were proved to be of such a serious nature as to incapacitate the plaintiff from ever holding any responsible or active situation, and the jury awarded him 900/- damages.



[UNDER THE HOLLY.]

SCARLET BERRIES.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

CHAPTER X.

Sweat was the light of her eyes; but it suddenly sank into darkness, As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of wind at a casement.

All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow, All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing, All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of patience! *Brangeline.*

CYRUS HORTON thought it extremely singular that Paul should endeavour to isolate Mrs. Fanthorpe on her dying bed. It was a time when all who had known her should have been permitted to wait upon and comfort her to the best of their ability. The man-hunter knew enough of Paul's character to understand that he never did anything without a motive, and that he had a very strong and powerful one for adopting this peculiar course he did not question for a moment.

When they entered the chamber of the dying woman, they were enabled to see, by the aid of a solitary candle, that the once beautiful and fascinating Mrs. Fanthorpe was the wreck of her former self. She was terribly emaciated, and her face bore traces of prolonged and acute mental suffering. She was lying upon an old-fashioned four-post bedstead, from which the curtains had been drawn on one side, and when the sound of footsteps fell upon her ears she turned her head towards the door, but no sign of recognition followed, for her eyes were dim, and her sight was not sufficiently powerful to allow her to see the features of the man for whom she had sacrificed her youth and jeopardised her future.

A minute passed in silence. The two men regarded the poor creature with different thoughts: one, the Earl of St. Lawrence, was carried back to bygone days, when she was all in all to him, and he had sighed at her feet and called her the mistress of his heart. Since then he had acknowledged the vanity of human wishes. The other, indulging the instincts of the man-hunter, wondered how the dying woman before him, only half alive as she was, could be made to assist him in unravelling the tangled skein of the Fulham murder, and bring the actual culprit to the bar of justice, for his belief in the innocence of Herbert, Viscount Langdale, grew stronger hour by hour.

Suddenly Horton placed his finger on his lips, and drew nearer the bed on tiptoe, so as not to disturb the invalid, who was talking to herself in a low tone. Every word she uttered was of value to him, though another would have attached no importance to what he might have considered her incoherent ravings.

"I have not that crime to reproach myself with," said Mrs. Fanthorpe; "all but Anne Owen and myself thought that the children were changed, but I would not for worlds have nourished the infant of another woman. The earl believed that his wishes were complied with. I knew the contrary. Paul is verily my son, and Herbert is as truly Viscount Langdale, and the legitimate heir of the Earl of St. Lawrence."

"Do you hear that?" cried the earl, hoarsely, as he clutched the detective by the arm.

The sound of his voice roused Mrs. Fanthorpe, who ceased speaking and peered through the feeble light, as if trying to make out his figure and features.

"Fool," said the detective, angry, and forgetting the rank and station of his companion. "You have interrupted the train of thought."

"Who are you, and how dare you dictate to me?" exclaimed the earl, with rising anger.

"I am one who may be able to save your son's life, for Viscount Langdale is still your son, if what this woman says is true. Not another word, my lord. Would you stain your soul and your conscience with an unseemly disturbance by the death-bed of her whose existence you have embittered, and whom you strove to lead into crime and make your accomplice in a cruel fraud?"

The earl bowed his head, and answered:

"You are right. Pray pardon me. I have no power of self-control, and have been accustomed to passive obedience."

The detective pressed his hand, as a sign that all was forgotten and forgiven, and said:

"Speak to her."

Advancing to the bedside, the earl exclaimed, tenderly:

"Emily!"

The effect of the monosyllable was magical. The woman's eyes brightened, and she extended her withered hand as if to seek his.

"Emily," he repeated, "do you not know me?"

"It is you—at last, at last!" she cried. "Oh! Norman, I have longed and waited for this hour, and wondered whether your proud friends would keep you from me until I was cold in my coffin. I would have sent for you, and begged you to come to me, but the viper whom I have been cherishing in my bosom prevented me."

CYRUS HORTON drew nearer.

"I wanted to see you, if only to do an act of justice," continued Mrs. Fanthorpe. "You have thought that Herbert was my child. It is not so. The children were never changed, though we made you think so. Anne Owen has testified to this, and her confession, if we can call it so, will be found in a little box, buried at the foot of the holly bush in her garden. Poor thing! she suffered dearly for her share in the business, and I too. It killed us at last."

The man-hunter struck his forehead sharply with his clenched fist.

"Dolt! idiot!" he exclaimed. "What do I know? what am I fit for?"

And he recalled the lines found written upon a scrap of paper in the old woman's cottage on the day of the discovery of the murder.

"When doubts upon the family fall,

The Scarlet Berries shall clear them all."

To what should the Scarlet Berries refer if, not to the holly tree, which was just then laden with them? and, of course, if valuable papers were buried at its foot, the Scarlet Berries would in a manner clear up all the doubts which had fallen upon "the family," which it was equally apparent was that of the Earl of St. Lawrence.

"I, too, have been punished—I, too, have suffered, Emily," said the earl, sadly.

"But our son," continued Mrs. Fanthorpe, whose thoughts seemed eternally to run in one direction, "the son whom I have loved and cherished, and who knows himself to be my child—his conduct has been to me that of a wild beast. He has struck me, and broken my heart. He is killing me now. I know not how, but I am always worse after his visits. When I speak the truth, he says I rave, and he would have everyone believe that I do not know the meaning or nature of my words. The letters which I had kept as a remembrance of our love were the first traitors which revealed our secret. You, Norman, are my only friend. Save me—save me from my son—from the wretch who has treated me with such cruelty as would, if detailed, make you long to chastise him for his cowardice!"

"I will protect you, Emily," replied the earl. "Tell me what it is you wish that I should do."

"Take me away. Let me be far from his influence. I am very weak and ill, and can scarce collect my senses at times; but I think, dear Norman, that if he does not see me I may recover."

The earl was about to assure her that she should be removed, if possible, when the doctor who was in attendance upon her made his appearance.

He bowed to the gentlemen, and said :

" You are friends of the lady, I presume ? "

" We are," replied the earl.

As for Cyrus Horton, he was hunting all over the room, as was his way when he thought there was any discovery to be made.

" I trust you will cause my patient as little excitement as possible," continued Dr. Cooper, " as I have reason to think there is latent disease of the heart, and any agitation may prove fatal in her present state."

" I will follow your instructions in everything, doctor," answered the earl, " and I shall esteem it a favour if you will explain the nature of the illness from which the lady is suffering, and inform me whether it will be possible to remove her to another locality ? "

" To your latter question I must return an emphatic negative," answered Dr. Cooper. " To your first, I find some difficulty in replying. The malady is present, it is even deep-rooted, but it has puzzled and baffled my professional skill to classify it amongst any of the known forms of disease."

Cyrus Horton came running up with a packet of white powder, and, showing it to the doctor, said abruptly :

" Is that one of your prescriptions ? "

" No," answered Dr. Cooper, with a smile. " That is arsenic. Mr. Fanthorpe keeps it in small quantities to kill rats. I have remarked its presence before."

" Where ? " demanded the detective.

" In this room."

Pointing to the bed, and indicating Mrs. Fanthorpe, Cyrus Horton continued :

" Have you ever remarked its presence there, sir ? "

" I cannot say that I have," answered the doctor, somewhat confused. " The idea is so preposterous that—that it never entered my head."

" Exactly. Some people are so respectable that they are above suspicion. Poor human nature ! "

The doctor, not over pleased at this remark, was about to make some sharp retort, when the door opened quickly, and Paul appeared upon the scene. An expression of annoyance was visible on his countenance, but it speedily passed away, and his features became again stern and rigid. He was much too good and accomplished a master of himself to show any emotion when he thought it would be detrimental to his interests to do so.

Mrs. Fanthorpe both heard and saw him enter the room, and raising herself upon her elbow with, as it were, an expiring effort, she pointed towards him, and, in a harsh, shrill voice, uttered the single word :

" Assassin ! "

CHAPTER XI.

Woman ! once gay pleasure knew thee ;
Now thy cheeks are pale and deep ;
Love has been a felon to thee,
Yet, poor maiden, do not weep ;
There's rest for thee
All under the tree,
Where thou wilt sleep most peacefully.

White.

" ASSASSIN ! "

The terrible word rang through the room, and caused every eye to turn towards the young barrister, whose self-possession seemed only intelligible on the supposition that his mind was perfectly at ease, and that the accusation hurled at him had no terrors for so guiltless a conscience as his own.

The effort which it cost Mrs. Fanthorpe to make this denunciation so weakened her that she was unable to utter another syllable. She fell back upon a pillow, and gasped for breath. Dr. Cooper was at her side in a moment, and Paul, with the most perfect unconcern, fell upon his knees, and, folding his hands, seemed to be wrapped in silent prayer.

Meanwhile Mrs. Fanthorpe exhibited every sign of approaching dissolution. Her frame was convulsed as she laboured to draw her expiring breath, and suddenly a profound silence intimated that she had passed away.

A gloom fell over all.

Dr. Cooper signed to everyone to leave the room, and all went but Paul, who, prostrated as it seemed with grief, remained upon his knees and refused to move. His friend, the doctor, raised him gently, and, with a judicious mixture of persuasion and force, induced him to quit the chamber of death.

When he reached the drawing-room he exclaimed :

" I can offer you but a poor welcome. This is a terrible blow for me. I have loved her as a son should love a mother, and she has never uttered one harsh word against me until her reason gave way, and she became unconscious of what she said or did."

" Dr. Cooper," exclaimed Cyrus Horton, " will you be good enough to give me your candid opinion, as a medical man ? "

" About what ? " asked the doctor.

" A little matter of practice. Do you consider that Mrs. Fanthorpe was in the possession of her proper senses at the time of her death ? "

" Most assuredly ! " rejoined Dr. Cooper.

" Are you prepared to repeat that statement in a court of justice ? "

" Certainly."

" That is sufficient," said Cyrus Horton. " I am much obliged to you for the information."

While this conversation was taking place between the detective and the doctor, Earl St. Lawrence had approached Paul, who was lying on the sofa, apparently overwhelmed with sorrow.

" I came here," he exclaimed, " to speak to you on a matter of business, but I will refrain from doing so under the painful circumstances which have taken place."

" You are very kind," answered Paul, recovering himself. " I can, however, listen to anything you have to say."

" Very well. I have brought you the money you sent to my bankers' this afternoon. I had not had time to communicate with them, but when your messenger applied for the large sum of ten thousand pounds they telegraphed to me to ask for instructions. Here is the money in notes. It is enough for me that you are in need of it. Take it, and apply it as seems best to you."

Paul eagerly grasped the roll of Bank of England notes which the earl extended to him, and, placing them in his pocket, rejoined :

" I will tell you another time why I require this large sum of money, but at present I am so overwhelmed with grief that I only think of my loss. She who is gone was ever good and kind to me. I loved her as a mother, and the shock is a rude one."

The Earl St. Lawrence had not attached the importance to Mrs. Fanthorpe's dying words that Cyrus Horton had, and he shook the young man cordially by the hand, saying he should wish him good-bye, and expect to see him as soon as he had got over the grief from which he was suffering. Paul returned the pressure of the hand, and gave him an eloquent look, which answered the purpose of words.

Dr. Cooper soon followed the earl. As for Horton, he had been gone some minutes, and it is the latter whose movements we must follow on this eventful night.

He proceeded in a cab to the Waterloo Station, and inquired for an official whose duty it was to attend to the Lost Property Office.

" Well ? " he exclaimed, as he came forward. " Have you made the inquiries I directed ? "

" Yes," replied the man.

" And what have you discovered ? "

" An umbrella and an overcoat, which were found in one of the Richmond trains on the night in question."

" Where are they ? " inquired Horton.

The man went to fetch them, and returned in a few minutes with the articles in his hand. The coat was of a light fabric, such as a man would wear when going to the theatre. On a piece of tape, fastened to the collar, was written " P. Fanthorpe," and the umbrella had the same name engraved on a silver plate.

" Good ! " exclaimed Horton. " There is the sovereign I promised you. Let these things be forthcoming when necessary."

The man-hunter next took a ticket to Putney, and walked over the quaint, old-fashioned bridge to Fulham. The moon was shining brightly, and played over the waters of the river as he passed.

The night was all he could wish.

He went direct to the police-station, and found Sergeant Andrews at liberty. The sergeant regarded the man-hunter with admiration.

" You were not long in caging the bird," he exclaimed. " I wish I had your talent. It is a rare one. There are few in the force who can even come up to you half way."

" This time, sergeant, I have made a mistake, and I don't mind confessing it to you. I have done some good things in my time, but one cannot be infallible. My object in coming here is to make a little further research at Holly Cottage," answered Horton.

" I can go with you. Is there anything you will require ? "

" Nothing more than a dark lantern and a spade."

Sergeant Andrews soon obtained the articles that the detective asked for, and together they walked through some narrow lanes to the cottage in which the widow Owen had lived, and in which she met her violent end. Andrews produced the key of the cottage, but Horton stopped him, saying :

" I don't want to go inside. Your arms are younger than mine. Take the spade, and set to work at the foot of that holly bush. Be careful how you dig, lest you should destroy anything buried there."

The sergeant nodded, and began to turn up the ground, which was moist and clayey. The third spadeful he took revealed a small tin case to the quick eyes of Horton, and he pounced upon it, crying :

" That will do. I shall not want any more work done to-night, sergeant. There is half-a-sovereign to drink the Queen's health, and now good night to you."

Andrews took the money, and looked curiously after the old man, who went away rapidly with his prize, anxious to get to town and examine its contents.

" He's a strange fellow," muttered the sergeant. " But he does manage to get to the bottom of things. It's a queer taste of his, though—hunting down people. I wouldn't do it if I was not paid for it."

Taking up the spade and the lantern, he slowly retraced his steps to the police-station, while Horton took the first train to London. At the terminus he entered a cab, and was driven to his own house. There he broke open the tin box, which contained a packet of letters written by the Earl St. Lawrence to the widow Owen, giving her full and complete instructions how to proceed respecting the changing of the children. Under this packet was a document in the widow's handwriting, in which she declared that, yielding to the entreaties of Mrs. Fanthorpe, whom she called her dear friend Emily, she had not carried out the orders of the earl, and swore solemnly that the children were not changed. She concluded by saying :

" I take Heaven to witness that Paul is the son of Mrs. Fanthorpe, and Herbert the true and legitimate offspring of the Earl of St. Lawrence. I make this confession lest any dispute should some day arise."

Why she buried the papers she did not explain, but Horton fancied it might be because she was naturally of a secretive disposition, or that she feared Paul would demand them of her, and perhaps use violence to possess himself of them.

It was quite late when he brought the perusal of these important documents to a close; but, late as was the hour, he rang his bell, and was not surprised to find it answered by the servant, Mary, whose eyes were wet with tears.

" Oh, sir ! " she exclaimed, " I am so glad to see you come in ! My poor dear mistress is gone for ever, and I wish I could go with her to her last rest."

" Nonsense, my girl," answered Horton. " You will get over it. Where is Mr. Paul ? "

" Gone out, sir. He just packed up a carpet bag, not saying anything abusive to me for letting you into missis's room, as I expected."

" Did he say nothing ? "

" Not a word, sir."

" How long has he been gone ? " demanded Horton.

" About two hours and a half, sir."

" That will do," said the man-hunter. " I am going out again, Mary. You need not sit up for Mr. Paul, who I daresay will be back before morning, and has a key."

The girl withdrew, putting her apron to her swollen eyes, and the man-hunter added to himself :

" We must not let the grass grow under our feet. Paul has taken the alarm. It remains to be seen what the telegraph will do."

With these words he put on his hat and quitted the house, gliding like a shadow along the almost deserted streets, which were but faintly illuminated with the sickly glare of the gas-lamps.

CHAPTER XII.

And hark ! the wind-god, as he flies,
Moans hollow in the forest trees,
And sailing on the gusty breeze,
Mysterious music dies.

That requiem wild is mine,
It warns me to the lonely shrine,

The cold turf altar of the dead ;
My grave shall be in you lone spot,

Where I shall die, by all forgot.

Clifton Green.

It was about half-past ten on the following morning that Paul quitted a city hotel, where he had passed the night, and walked to the nearest cab-stall, selecting a close four-wheeled cab to take him to Throgmorton Street. He sat in one corner, and leant back as if he wished to avoid observation.

The cab stopped by his directions at the office of a stock and sharebroker, at whose house we have seen him on that Christmas morning disbursing the large sum which he had received the night before from Cyrus Horton. Mr. Loseby had just arrived as Paul entered the office, and, shaking him by the hand, drew him into his private room.

" At last you have been successful," exclaimed the broker. " All your securities have increased in value, and I have a large sum to hand over to you. Is it for that you have come ? "

" Yea," Paul replied. " And I wish to have the balance in my favour as soon as possible—at once, if

you can make it convenient. The fact is I have just lost a near and dear relative, and I propose to leave England for time."

"It is against my rule to pay before the fortnightly settling," answered the broker; "but I will close your accounts for you at once, and give you the balance—which I think will be nearer five than four thousand pounds—in, say, a couple of hours' time."

"I will call again," said Paul. "It is now eleven; at one I shall expect you to be ready for me."

He left the office with a quick, elastic step, saying to himself, "All goes well with me. I shall, in the middle of the day, possess a large sum of money."

He broke off abruptly. He had reached the street, and someone pronounced his name. To his astonishment, it was his old friend, Mr. Horton, who at once linked his arm in his, exclaiming :

"This is delightful! I didn't expect to meet so welcome a companion. You have caused me much anxiety. Paul. You left the house so mysteriously, that I could not imagine where you were gone to or what your intentions were."

Paul became pale, and trembled, but he soon recovered himself, and said :

"You came so suddenly upon me that you quite alarmed me, Mr. Horton. I am glad I have met you, because I can confide in you."

"In me! Of course you can. I shall be as silent as the tomb," returned the man-hunter.

"I came into the City to get some money that a broker owes me. I have been a great speculator, and at last I have gained considerably. It is my intention to go abroad for a short time until all the unpleasantness which has lately occurred is forgotten. I hope sincerely that Herbert will be acquitted. I could not stay in England to hear of his condemnation, so I shall go away until all is over, and when I return, perhaps, the way will be smooth for me to assume my position as Viscount Langdale."

"Very well planned indeed," answered Mr. Horton; "and when do you propose to take your departure?"

"This afternoon."

"For what part?"

"Dover and Calais, to Paris. I shall stay there a few days until I decide where to direct my wandering footstamps."

"Excellent!" said Horton, rubbing his hands, "you could not do better. It is indeed fortunate that I met you, because you can spend your last hours in my company. Last hours in England, I mean—England, the country of the free!"

Paul was gay, and talked confidently of the pleasure he should enjoy abroad.

"You know, Mr. Horton, that I have worked very hard, and had little enjoyment during my life," he said. "I have done everything to gain money—to shorten the drudgery to which I have been condemned. I have speculated in various ways unknown to my friends, and at length I think the season of toil is over. Model of industry as you think me, I have such a profound horror of poverty and hard work that I could commit a crime to escape a life-long experience of the two."

"I believe you!" exclaimed Cyrus Horton, curiously.

They walked about the City, chatting in this way until past noon. Horton stopped once at a tavern to write a note, which he despatched to its destination by a commissioner, without allowing Paul to see the name or address on it.

Punctually at one Paul and his friend presented themselves at the broker's.

Pointing to Horton, Mr. Loseby exclaimed :

"Is this gentleman with you?"

"He is!" shortly answered Paul.

"Take a seat, sir," said the broker, "and will you, Mr. Fanthorpe, follow me?"

Broker and client disappeared in an inner office.

There was a knock at the outer door. It was repeated quickly three times.

"I will go," said Horton; getting up for that purpose; and he admitted six policemen in uniform.

The clerks stared at one another, and looked towards Horton for an explanation. He took no notice of the astonishment of the clerks, but putting himself at the head of the men, walked to the inner office, and, opening the door, allowed the constables to enter and group themselves about the small apartment, so as to render any attempt at escape futile.

"Arrest your prisoner!" exclaimed Cyrus Horton, in a voice of thunder.

Paul looked from one to the other, amazed, and, at last comprehending that he was the prisoner indicated by the man-hunter, sprang on a table, hastily drew a pistol from his pocket, and shot himself in the breast.

As the body fell with a heavy sound to the floor, staining a bundle of notes with blood as it descended, Horton uttered an exclamation of annoyance.

"Wrong again!" he muttered. "I should have

ascertained whether or not he had any weapons. He will escape me, I fear."

Paul's eyes were fixed vindictively upon Horton as they glazed in death.

"Villain!" he said, in a faint voice, "you have triumphed! Had I but suspected!"

The clerks were with difficulty kept back in the outside office by the police. The noise of the shot, the smoke, the presence of the constables, all electrified them, and Mr. Loseby stood like a statue, unable to move, so great was his horror and surprise.

Sinking on one knee by the side of the desperate man who had just endeavoured to rashly take his own life, the man-hunter said, in a voice thick with emotion :

"Confess—confess! You have not long to live, and you can have no object in condemning Herbert for that which you, as well as I, know he is not guilty!"

A change came over the expression of Paul's features as he answered:

"You are right. There is no need for concealment now. It was I who murdered the widow Owen, and who have poisoned my mother, because I loved money, and they stood between me and a title to which was attached a large fortune. I did not wish the innocent to suffer, but I was compelled to do on. I was pressed for money on all sides, and—"

A rush of blood to his mouth impeded his further utterance.

Cyrus Horton bent down to hear what further he might say, but the words he had spoken were the last he uttered on earth.

When Horton was satisfied that he was dead, and that no power or skill could assist him, he appealed to those in the room as witnesses of what Paul had said, his confession being an entire exculpation of Viscount Langdale.

It was now evident that Paul had first of all obtained a knowledge of the change of children contemplated by the Earl of St. Lawrence, and that he had taxed his mother with the circumstances as soon as he had discovered the letters. She, in her turn, had told him that the change had never taken place, and that the widow Owen could assure him of the same fact.

The letters he had found enabled him to prove his case, because the earl was not aware that his orders respecting the children had not been carried out. With the widow Owen and Mrs. Fanthorpe dead, Paul thought that nothing could stand in the way of the realisation of his ambitious scheme.

It was to become the wealthy son of the earl that he had, with considerable ingenuity and hypocrisy, imposed upon everyone, after, with devilish determination, cruelly killing the widow Owen, and poisoning his mother with a preparation of arsenic.

Cyrus Horton had been on the wrong track at first, but he had made up for his blunder subsequently. The Scarlet Berries had assisted him materially, and as circumstances were explained, it appeared that all which had told so seriously against Herbert was a mere tissue of evidence as unreliable as ever sent an innocent man to the scaffold.

In the moment of his triumph Paul perished, his fate being a terrible example of the sure punishment with which justice never ceases to follow the footsteps of the guilty.

The body was removed in a shell through the crowded city, and Cyrus Horton went as quickly as he was able to Park House, to communicate his news to the Earl St. Lawrence.

The nobleman, on hearing all that had taken place, was like a man awaking from a long and hideous dream.

It was certain that Viscount Langdale was his son, after all, and that he was innocent of the dreadful crime which had been laid to his charge, chiefly by the ingenuity of the man-hunter.

No one knew where Herbert was to be found. He had been driven away by his father, and the Countess of Corrington had sternly forbidden her daughter to hold any intercourse with him while he remained a suspected person.

But the newspapers in the afternoon informed him at the hotel where he had taken refuge of what had happened, and he saw that his innocence was fairly established. With a paper in his hand, he sought Lady Laura Pangbourne, who had been made aware of what had taken place by a message from the Earl of St. Lawrence.

She received him with open arms, and they mingled their tears together.

The countess surprised them during this affecting interview, and made what amends she could for her former harsh treatment. She joined their hands, saying :

"Fortune has cruelly tried you both, my children. Let us hope that the crucial test to which you have been subjected has purified your hearts. May you be happy!"

The Earl of St. Lawrence placed no impediment in the way of their immediate union. On the twelfth day after Christmas they were married, and to avoid the sympathy of friends as well as the remarks of enemies, they proceeded abroad immediately, and enjoyed such true happiness in each other's company, that they could scarcely believe in the reality of the events which had taken place during that dreadful Christmas, the most exciting and the most miserable that they had ever passed in their lives.

The clouds that had hung over them were dissipated by the sun of felicity which now surrounded them.

Cyrus Horton gave up his fondness for man-hunting, presumably owing to his wrong calculations, which had nearly sent an innocent man to death.

Recovering the shock which his nerves had received, the Earl of St. Lawrence lived a new life, in the society of his amiable daughter-in-law and the merry grandch'ldren which blessed her union with Viscount Langdale.

THE END.

SCIENCE.

PORTABLE GAS MACHINE.—Mr. G. Flintoff, gas engineer, has patented a process in gas making, with the view of rendering gas consumers independent of gas companies. The machine, a cylinder fixed within another of larger size, is charged with rock oil; provision is made for the oil to trickle from the reservoir to the bottom of the space between the outer skin of the machine and the cylinder. The bottom of this space is filled with wool, which absorbs the oil as discharged. When gas is drawn off from the machine, a piece of clockwork apparatus on the top of the machine is put in motion, and pumps in the atmospheric air proportionately to the consumption or discharge of gas. The mixture of atmospheric air and oil vapour constitutes the inflammable gas. Any number of burners may be supplied from the machine, in the same way as from an ordinary meter, and the pressure regulated at the "main"—that is, the discharge pipe from the machine—and at each burner, in the usual way. Two shillings and sixpence per 1,000 cubic feet is said to be the cost of the gas.

COMPOSITION OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF PORCELAIN.—The materials used for the manufacture of porcelain vary, as will be seen, considerably. At Nymphenburg, Bavaria, the mass is made up of:—Kaolin from Passau, 65 parts; fine white sand, 4 parts; quartz, 21 parts; gypsum, 5 parts; broken up biscuit, 5 parts. Vienna:—Kaolin from Zeulitz, 34 parts; kaolin from Passau, 25 parts; kaolin from Unghvar, 6 parts; quartz, 14 parts; felspar, 6 parts; metal (broken and ground-up china), 3 parts. Meissen, Saxon-Prussia:—Kaolin from Aue, 18 parts; kaolin from Sosa, 18 parts; kaolin from S. Ulitz, 36 parts; felspar, 26 parts; metal, 2 parts. The mixture of materials used at Sevres is only known to those who have the management of that famous manufactory; the kaolin chiefly comes from St. Yrieux.

PAPER MAKING FROM WOOD.—A correspondent (who is the inventor of this process) writes:—"It is stated that the cost of wood pulp is somewhat dearer in price than that made from straw or esparto." Allow me to state that this is an error; the loss in weight of wood is somewhat of greater percentage than that of straw, being as $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$, but there all advantage ceases. I can make a baling of wood and one of straw with a less amount of alkali than it requires to make two of straw. The fuel necessary to produce this result is much less, the raw material in any wood-producing country is less by quite one half, and the product in pulp, whether bleached or unbleached, is worth 25 to 35 per cent. more from wood than from straw pulp, which is chiefly due to its wonderful strength, length of fibre, and cleanliness, so that the cost is less to prepare it and the value greater when it is prepared.

GREAT TELESCOPES.—Mr. M. de la Rue is having a lens constructed of thirteen inches in diameter, soon to be in operation, from which, in the hands of a skilful director, much may be expected. Professor Henry Draper, of America, has very nearly completed a new silver glass reflector of twenty-eight inches diameter (the largest of the kind yet constructed, except one by Foucault). With this instrument original negatives will be taken six inches in diameter, with provision for extending them to nine and a-half inches if desirable. Such pictures will, of course, contain an amount of detail not possible in those taken with ordinary instruments, which vary from one to two inches in diameter, according to the size of the telescope. Professor Draper expects thus to obtain photographs of larger size and sustaining higher magnifying power than any that have yet been produced. There is now at Melbourne,

in Australia, a powerful reflecting telescope four feet in diameter, of Cassegrain form, which will be supplied with the necessary apparatus for photography, as well as for spectroscopic investigation. This derives its importance chiefly from the fact that the work will be prosecuted in rich fields of the southern hemisphere. We may look forward to important discoveries with such means at our disposal.

GUNPOWDER.—Something like daylight is beginning to break through the darkness surrounding the question. It seems that the balance of evidence tends to show that though doubtless improvements may be made in the wood-powder, yet that it has many advantages over the black, which for many kinds of sport, such, for instance, as wood-shooting, will render it more desirable. The great fault at present found with the wood-powder is the occasional failure of a cartridge, and this is a decided disadvantage, but we question whether the absence from smoke and recoil, combined with its great cleanliness, do not more than counterbalance the failing. The idea formerly entertained that the wood-powder requires pressure in loading seems to be exploded, and this also in one step in advance. Another agent, the gun-felt, seems to promise well. It is, however, absolutely necessary in using this powder (?) to be careful that it is quite dry; indeed, it would be well to warn the cartridges by the fire before using, as the felt absorbs damp with great rapidity and ease.

THE NEW SYSTEM OF TELEGRAPHY.

FOREMOST among the improvements which the Postmaster-General will introduce into the working of the telegraphs, as soon as they come under his control, is a code for the transmission of telegrams by the use of Roman numerals as figures instead of by the ordinary Morse spelling process. An elaborate code has been drawn up by its inventor, Major Bolton, in which particular words and phrases are represented by definite combinations of numerals, in addition to which there are symbols for expressing decimals, fractions, stops, italics, inverted commas, &c. There is also a spelling code for rendering proper names or uncommon words.

The code is arranged alphabetically, and the signs are distributed upon the pages in two columns, containing fifty groups each, or 100 per page, so that the code book is consulted by the sender like a dictionary, and his correspondent reads off the groups of symbols, and by means of his book readily translates them into words. Let us take an example. We desire to send this message: "What is the state of cotton market? What are you buying?" This by Bolton's code runs into 0666, 0369, or twenty-one symbols in all. The telegraphs would, therefore, merely have to convey, and the correspondent to receive, these two groups—0666, 0369—which, by means of the code-book or key, the latter would translate into words. The question represented by the ordinary spelling process would entail 105 symbols. The illustration will serve to show two of the main advantages of this system—its rapidity and simplicity, another great advantage being the applicability of the system to any language, numerals being a universal language, and it being only necessary, therefore, to establish the code in the different tongues to permit of the transmission of messages without any chance of error in translation. There is yet one other advantage to be named, and that is the secrecy of the system.

Upon the whole, Major Bolton's system of coding telegraphic messages is not very dissimilar from the principle of the international code of flag-signals lately introduced for speaking vessels at sea.

PROTOPLASM.—WHAT IT IS.

We have said something about this subject in a former number, but a somewhat closer attention may well be given to the second of the two great reparative agents in nature—the vital agent, or protoplasm. Protoplasm is found in plants and animals. These convert fluid and gaseous matter into dense sounds, which, under favourable circumstances, accumulate in strata of vast thickness. Peat bogs may be cited amongst the general examples of the accumulation of solid matter upon the earth's surface by the action of plants; and many thousand square miles at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, 10,000 to 15,000 feet beneath the surface of the sea, are at present being covered with a chalky and siliceous substance by the action of plants and animals—Diatomaceæ, Foraminifera, Radiolaria, and Spongidae. Further, great areas of the bottom of the Pacific and other oceans are at present being covered by beds of limestone, which are the products of certain animals known as the Actinzoa; a considerable portion of that part of North America which is called Florida having been made by these animals, and is now being extended by the same means.

As to the nature of protoplasm, it is the doctrine of

Professor Huxley—our great Biologist on the physical bases of life—that there is a unity of power, of form, and substantial composition pervading the whole living world. Protoplasm is a complex body, consisting almost entirely of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen. We may find on almost every wall, or on the bark of trees, particularly at this season of the year, a kind of greenish film which, if subjected to microscopic examination, will be seen to consist of roundish particles of a peculiar substance of no very clearly definable character, but which has been found to contain the four elementary bodies just named. Ordinary plants—for such we must continue to call them—consist of masses of protoplasm, each provided with a wooden case, of different constituents associated together, inside which will be found a gelatinous matter having the same general substance as that known as protein. It is not said that they are proved to be absolutely identical; but they so closely resemble the same kind of substance found in animals, as in flesh and muscle, that it is now agreed to call them by the same name, and to consider them as identical.

Plants feed, grow, multiply, die, and are resolved into simple compounds, which are chiefly carbonic acid, water, and ammonia. Pursuing the examination of the interior of the wooden cases, the inner surface consists of a layer of semi-fluid matter, full of the innumerable and minute granules already spoken of as protoplasm, and in a condition of unceasing activity. Local contractions of the whole thickness of its substance are seen under a sufficient magnifying power, passing slowly and gradually from point to point, with the appearance of progressive waves. Further, the granules are seen to be driven in rapid streams through channels, and commonly in the same direction, though there are partial currents which follow different routes. For sometimes trains of granules may be seen coursing swiftly in opposite directions within a twenty-thousandth of an inch of one another, while occasionally opposite streams come into direct collision, and after a longer or shorter struggle one predominates.

These particles have likewise a marvellous activity in changing their forms with great rapidity, drawing in and thrusting out prolongations of their substance. Take, for example, the seed of any common plant, a mustard seed or a bean, cut it open in section, and it will be seen to contain a number of cavities (much resembling, for familiar illustration, what we see in an old cheese), in each of which is a separate mass of protoplasm, while the cells are identical with protein. There is, therefore, no doubt, on a close examination of the seed, that it is neither more nor less than a mass of protoplasm aggregated together.

Supposing a seed to be sown, it is possible to trace the progress of the plant in growth until we find in the pollen masses of bodies, each of which is identical with protoplasm. And so passing step by step from seed to seed—from the seed sown and ripened and sown again—we can discover nothing more than what we have seen in protoplasm and protein. Such is the cycle of vegetable life.

Thus in the cycle of vegetable life is seen an eternal transmutation of the matter of the world. The same condition of facts may be seen if we turn to the animal world. Ordinary animals consist of masses of protoplasm, not enclosed in wooden cases, but imbedded in other matters, which result from the modification of protoplasm. The animal feeds, grows, multiplies, dies, and is resolved into simpler compounds, which are chiefly carbonic acid, water, and ammonia.

A living illustration in pencil was drawn of an egg in the process of incubation. Examine the little patch or "little star," from the twelfth to the eighth of an inch in diameter, at the top of the egg—that is really as much the body of the barn-door fowl, which will in due time issue from the egg, as the body of the child is of the future man. If examined microscopically it will be found to be made up of particles essentially of the same form and substance as protoplasm. Each presents a nucleus, which we need not now stay to examine more in detail; but, subjected to chemical tests, it is found to give similar results on being resolved into similar compounds, which are chiefly carbonic acid, water, and ammonia. Ordinary animals cannot make protoplasm, but must be supplied with it, and the chicken while in the egg draws its nutriment from the stores secreted in the yolk. Ordinary plants, on the contrary, can make it from carbonic acid, water, and ammonia. And so the matter contained in living bodies is continually undergoing a circulation from the not-living world, through the living world, back to the not-living world.

A SCHEME for widening London Bridge has been presented to the Lord Mayor and Common Council,

in which the proposers suggest that caissons equal in width to the present piers should be sunk in front of the end of every pier, and as close to the cutwaters as their foundation will allow. On these caissons would be built piers and cutwaters, faced with granite ashlars, in courses exactly corresponding to those in the existing piers, so that when complete the piers would present a perfectly uniform appearance, but would be 40ft. longer than at present. These piers would carry iron girders exactly corresponding in form with the arches of the present bridge; some of the girders would be placed close against the face of each of the existing arches, altogether concealing the masonry faces of the present arches. Upon the girders carried by the piers a superstructure would be formed, carrying the footpaths, parapets, lamps, &c., so that if the bridge were altered on this plan, it would finally appear as a granite and iron bridge with five arches. It would thus retain its present shape, approaches and levels, and only to those passing under the bridge and looking up it would appear as a compound structure. The roadway would, in the event of the alteration, occupy the whole of the present width, and two 16ft. footpaths would be added. The estimated cost of such alterations, without highly ornate decorations, is 80,000.

THE HAMPTON MYSTERY.

CHAPTER LII.

My heart is firm;
There's nought within the compass of humanity
But I would dare and do.

Sir A. Hunt.

On beholding Bittly in the ale-house, Lord Grosvenor's resolution was taken at once. He would watch and follow him. He felt a conviction, which no reasoning could either strengthen or weaken, that Bittly had come to Pencey to be of service to Lord Adlowe, and that by following him he should arrive at Giraldia's prison.

He slouched his hat over his face, pulled up his coat collar, and walked up and down the street, keeping a vigilant eye upon the ale-house door. Occasionally he went close to it and looked in.

During the progress of his self-imposed vigil, the evening came on and the lamps were lighted in the shops. The keeper of the ale-house came out and lighted a great red lantern over his door, and lights gleamed from his windows, and sounds of merriment issued from his establishment.

Growing uneasy and anxious, Lord Grosvenor at length entered the ale-shop, and called for a glass of ale. While it was being drawn, he employed his eyes to good purpose.

The shop was an ordinary specimen of its class. The floor was covered with sawdust, the counter laden with bottles and an array of tumblers. On the side of the room opposite the bar were several small tables, and men were seated around these drinking and smoking.

Through the curling smoke Lord Grosvenor discerned Bittly, now quite intoxicated and helpless, his head drooping on his breast, his figure leaning heavily against his nearest neighbour, who was in little better condition.

The confined and tainted air of the place nearly made Grosvenor ill. He paid for his ale and made a feint of sipping it, still keeping his gaze upon the nearly unconscious Bittly.

The ale-house keeper's glances followed his.

"A little overcome, sir," he said, with a smile. "He doesn't live in the town, sir. I shall have to make him up a bed for to-night. He seems to have plenty of money."

As he concluded, the landlord summoned an assistant and gave orders that Bittly should be housed for the night.

Grosvenor set down his glass, and went out into the fresh air of the street.

"I cannot follow him to-night," he thought, dismally. "I could not question the landlord, lest he tell Bittly in the morning, and so put Giraldia's gaolers on their guard. I must wait till tomorrow morning."

With a sigh, he took his way to the inn. At daybreak he was astir again, and as soon as the shops began to open he was back at the ale-house.

He found the landlord behind the bar, arranging bottles, but the room had no other occupant.

Calling for a glass of ale, he carelessly inquired after the inebriate of the previous night.

"Oh, that man!" said the landlord, sociably. "He's a stranger here, and knows enough to keep a close tongue between his teeth. He likes a glass pretty well. I don't know where he lives, but he said he should be back again to-night. He has taken a fancy to some of our jolly fellows."

"I should think," remarked Grosvenor, "that he would hardly get away before night, judging from the condition he was in last evening!"

"Oh, he was off before daylight, sir," returned the landlord. "Afraid of his wife, I shouldn't wonder!"

Grosvenor concealed his feeling of disappointment, and went back to the inn, to make inquiries there concerning any house newly let, or any strangers who might have recently come to the place.

His inquiries proved to be vain and useless, no one being able to give him any information. Nothing remained, therefore, but to wait for Bittly's next visit to the ale-house, and to keep a more vigilant watch upon his movements.

The day being on his hands with nothing to do, Lord Grosvenor rode down to Hamptonwold, spending several hours with the Lady Beatrice, whom he found dispirited and gloomy. She informed him that a painful sense of bereavement haunted her in every moment, sleeping or waking, and that, unable to bear it longer, she had written to her husband to pay her a secret visit, bringing Herbert with him.

"I may be indiscreet," she said, with a passionate tremor of her voice that went to Grosvenor's heart, "but I am nervous, and troubled, and care-worn. I have told Geoffrey to meet me in the little Persian summer-house to-morrow morning at ten. He will be there. Oh that we might die there together, and end all this vain and terrible struggle!"

"Say not so, dear Lady Beatrice!" exclaimed Grosvenor, smiling. "The meeting will be a little secret romance, without danger or peril. I will bring Giralda and Fay to share in it!"

The Lady Beatrice looked at him, her gloomy eyes illuminated with a sudden and glorious light. She had been mourning for her lost children, and had become unusually despondent. Grosvenor's presence made her actually radiant.

"Bring them to me," she exclaimed, "and all this burden of care will drop from me! I want to look in Giralda's eyes and see that she is still bright and hopeful. I want to clasp my boy—my youngest boy—to my bosom, and feel him nestle there as he used to do. Then my courage and hopefulness will come back, and I can feel strong to do and bear again!"

"They shall be here," declared Grosvenor, solemnly. "We will have a little family re-union to-morrow morning. I will bring Giralda and Fay here unseen."

"We cannot be too careful," rejoined the Lady Beatrice, her face again clouding. "After I had despatched my letter to the Eyrie, I received a note from my father that he and Lord Trevalyan would be here to-day, and that the marquis was in a very disconsolate mood, and had been induced to visit Hamptonwold for a day or two. I do not want to be rash, but I have trodden on the brink of dangers so long that I have grown careless of them."

Lord Grosvenor encouraged her ladyship with his bright hopefulness, and when he left her in the afternoon she was in a much brighter mood.

It was sunset when he re-entered Pencoed.

It was twilight when he again took up his station in front of the ale-house.

Bittly was not there. The young lord knew well that Mrs. Bittly was a virago, and that her vicious qualities were always greatly excited by her husband's intemperate habits, and he feared that his man would not make his appearance that night.

In this he was mistaken. He was working himself up into a desperate mood, when Bittly came swaggering down into the street, and strode into the ale-house with the air of one who feels himself a monarch.

"He has been taking something already," thought Grosvenor. "After being out so long last night, I believe he'll go home early to-night. He wouldn't dare repeat his offence so soon."

Events proved that he was right.

An hour or two passed, during which the merriment waxed high in the ale-house, and the young lord paced to and fro impatiently, first on one side of the street, then on the other, his tall, slight figure closely muffled, and his hat drawn down over his noble, anxious face.

And then came his reward.

Bittly, swaggering and talking loudly, came out with a companion, and the two reeled up the street arm in arm.

Lord Grosvenor followed close behind him.

The men paused near the outskirts of the place and had a short colloquy, after which they parted with a burst of maudlin sentiment, Grosvenor concealing himself in the shadow of a gateway.

Then Bittly struck out on one of the country roads, reeling and singing snatches of songs, Grosvenor keeping near to him.

In this way nearly three miles were traversed. They had come within sight of the house where Giralda and Fay were confined, and Lord Grosvenor was regarding it earnestly and curiously, some instinct telling him that he was near Giralda's prison, when Bittly suddenly deposited himself upon the ground in the shadow of a hedge, and fell to weeping and moaning in a maudlin manner.

Grosvenor came up to him.

"What is the matter, my man?" he demanded. Bittly was too much intoxicated to recognise his lordship, whose features were still half concealed, or to feel any surprise at his salutation.

"Not'n—not'n!" he returned, tearfully. "That is, 'tan't none o' your business, as nobody knows on. Le' me 'lone! G'way!"

"But if I could help you?" suggested Grosvenor, jingling a handful of silver.

Bittly raised himself upon his elbow with a momentary display of eagerness, and then he sank back, grumbling:

"Don't want no money, no nothing! Wish was back 't Little Grosvenor, hanged 'f don't! Ol' woman scold, scold, scold! Wish was dead and done with 't!" and he snivelled.

Lord Grosvenor saw that the dread of impending evil was strong with the man.

"Where do you live?" he asked.

Bittly cocked his eye knowingly, gave his hat a push on one side, and looked suspiciously at his questioner. The next moment the liquor he had taken overcame his caution, and he answered, with another burst of tears:

"Over there!" indicating with an unsteady forefinger the house Lord Grosvenor had noticed. "Dog's life! Go out there, have good time, catch it when get home! Life ain't worth havin'!"

Grosvenor thought a moment. He was determined to effect Giralda's rescue that very night; but how?

He considered the idea of going back to Pencoed, and procuring assistance and effecting the rescue by force, but he discharged it speedily. Such a course would only provoke gossip and scandal, which, to say the least, would be highly injurious, the more especially as the Earl of Hampton and the Marquis of Trevalyan had already arrived in the neighbourhood, and were now at Hamptonwold.

He thought of waiting till morning, and going to the house disguised as a pedlar, but clearly he would gain nothing by that. No pedlar could, of course, gain access to the captives.

No, it was plain that he must move quickly, and on this very night.

In a brief space he had thought out a course of action.

Bittly had sunk down into a sort of drowsiness, quite oblivious of his interlocutor. Lord Grosvenor touched him with his foot, partially arousing him.

"See here, my man," he exclaimed. "I want to make a temporary exchange with you. Lend me your coat and hat and muffler, and you shall have my top-coat, which is a fine thick one, and a sovereign besides."

"Makes no difference," replied Bittly, drowsily. "Where's the money?"

Interpreting this as a consent, Grosvenor relieved the man of the garments he had mentioned, substituting his own hat and top-coat upon the limp and helpless figure, Bittly all the while whining and protesting.

"Can't you le' me 'lone?" he snivelled. "Wakin' honest man up this hour the night? Have the law on you. Never had no peace my life since day was born. Always trouble. Always knocked about like mis'ble old ninpin. G'way!"

The exchange of garments being effected, Lord Grosvenor permitted the man to relapse into drowsiness, while he put on over his own the garments he had borrowed.

Bittly was about as tall as himself, but stouter. Having on two coats, however, Lord Grosvenor exhibited very near the amplitude required to effect a resemblance. The old ragged woollen muffler tied twice about his neck and over his chin, as Bittly had worn it, and the old, worn, slouched hat, with its torn brim, pulled over his face, made him look startlingly like the man to whom they belonged.

The night was not chilly, being, on the contrary, quite warm for April. Yet Lord Grosvenor covered the recumbent, sleeping man carefully, laid his own hat closer over his face to screen it from the dews, and then moved at a quick pace towards the house.

As he went along, he put his hand in Bittly's coat-pocket, and discovered a house-key.

"So far, good!" he mentally ejaculated, his spirits rising. "I can enter the house at will. The rest I shall leave to the emergency."

As he came nearer to the dwelling, he eyed it more closely, marking the boarded upper windows.

"That is her room," he thought, his face flushing with eagerness. "My darling! She does not dream I am so near."

He stood at the gate a moment, his eyes appraised. A faint gleam of light above the boarding of the window told him that the occupant of the room had not yet retired. He was tempted to call to Giralda, and make known to her his presence, but he restrained the wild impulse, and walked slowly and cautiously around the house, to take a preliminary view of the premises.

The only light on the lower floor came from the

kitchen—a room much more congenial to Mrs. Bittly than the parlour.

Lord Grosvenor halted at the window, and looked in through an opening in the shutter.

Mrs. Bittly and Rigby were within. A discontented scowl disfigured the hard visage of the former. The latter was sipping, quite at his ease, a bowl of punch which he had just brewed.

"Of course," he was saying, his tones readily penetrating to Grosvenor's ears, "after being up all last night, and on guard, too, I shall go to bed tonight. I am sleepy, and am not fit to keep watch, and what's more, I don't intend to do it."

Mrs. Bittly scowled still more fiercely.

"I never could stand it to sit up," she muttered. "I've been on my feet all day, and am just tired out. Bittly ought to keep watch, and to behave himself. I wish I had him here this minute."

"I wrote to my lord this morning to the address he gave me," said Rigby, tranquilly, "telling him of Bittly's drunkenness of last night. His lordship will be here in the morning, I know. He won't never trust a drunken nor a drinking man with his secrets. How do we know that Bittly ain't letting out the whole story in some ale-house?"

Mrs. Bittly assented, again expressing a desire to lay hands on her truant husband.

"I ought to have left him at home," she acknowledged. "If my lord comes in the morning, I shall ask him to send him home."

By this time Rigby had finished his punch. He now arose, took up his candle, and declared that he was tired, and should leave the care of the house to her.

Mrs. Bittly grumbled a little, and stated her belief that all would be safe, since the captives were securely locked in their room, and expressed her determination also to retire.

"Nobody'll get track of the girl here," she added, taking up the remaining candle. "And if they do, they won't get the key of her room, which I keeps it in my own pocket," she added, determinedly. "Let 'em come!"

So saying, she withdrew, and Rigby also departed to his own room, which happened to be situated in the uppermost story, and at some distance from that of his assistants.

CHAPTER LIII.

Joy! the lost one is restored! Mrs. Remond.

LORD GROSVENOR marked the positions of the respective rooms of Mrs. Bittly and Rigby by the appearance of the lights, and then stole away cautiously, returning to Bittly, whom he found plunged into the remotest depths of slumber. Satisfied that he would not awaken from his drunken trance under several hours, he returned to the house, and waited in the garden until the lights had died out from every room but Giralda's, and until he felt positive that Rigby was asleep.

Then he opened and shut the gate, and walked slowly and staggeringly up the path to the front door.

He tried the key he had found in Bittly's pocket, after a bungling fashion. It fitted.

He unlocked the door and went into the front hall. It was dark. He slammed the door, being careful not to lock it, and to restore the key to his own pocket, with a view to possibly needing it.

He groped along the hall, grumbling in a hoarse voice, as he had heard Bittly grumble, his hat pulled over his face so as almost to meet his muffler.

He had not taken ten blundering steps, when as he had calculated and hoped, a door was opened at the end of the passage, and Mrs. Bittly betrayed her whereabouts by soundly rating her supposed husband for his delinquencies.

"The light is out," she exclaimed, wrathfully, "and you needn't think I am going to get up again to light it for you. Keep out of my room, Bittly. I can't bear to look at you. There's one comfort, you're going to catch what you deserve. Mr. Rigby has written to my lord, and my lord'll be here before many hours."

Lord Grosvenor grumbled an incoherent response, and the sound of his incoherent mumbling excited Mrs. Bittly to frenzy.

"Oh, you beast!" she ejaculated. "Don't you dare to come into this room. Jest you stay there in that hall all night, which I daresay is much better than the place you stayed in last night—you you porpus!"

Lord Grosvenor obeyed her energetically delivered command, sinking heavily and like a log on the cold hall-floor, and soon after producing an excellent imitation of Bittly's heavy breathing, as at that moment practised under the neighbouring hedge.

"There he goes," cried the irate Mrs. Bittly—"a tuning of his pipes! Well, he's safe for to-night; but won't he catch it in the morning both from my lord and me!"

She turned over in the bed, her last reflection being to her disturbed soul like oil poured upon the waters, and after a long period of tossings and mutterings she dropped into heavy sleep.

Then Lord Grosvenor, who had been as watchful and wakeful as a lynx, raised himself slowly on his elbow—waited a little while—and then cautiously and softly arose to his feet.

"She is asleep!" he thought. "I must have that key from her dress pocket. It is time to move!"

He stole into the bedroom silently.

A dim light struggled through the curtained window. He could see plainly the shrouded bed in the corner with its heavily slumbering occupant. He could also see the chair upon which she had cast off her garments. Her gown lay on top, plainly in view.

He crept towards it. He searched its folds for the pocket, found it, and withdrew the key.

Then he stole again to the door, and paused on the threshold.

His light movements had not disturbed the woman. Her breathing was louder and more regular than before.

"I'll make sure that she does not interrupt me," he thought, feeling for the key in the lock. "I do not mean to run any unnecessary risks!"

He deftly transferred the key to the outer side of the lock, passed it into the hall, drew the door shut, and locked it!

Then he paused to listen again.

The woman had not been in the slightest degree disturbed by his operations.

Breathing a sigh of thankfulness, he stole upstairs to the door of that upper chamber, the windows of which he had seen board over, and tapped softly.

There was a sound as of someone astir within.

Then he inserted the key cautiously in the lock, turned the bolt, and opened the door gently, repeating his low knock.

Having opened the door, he paused on the threshold, calling in a whisper :

"Giralta!"

There came a low cry from within the chamber, a quick spring, and Giralta—pale, agitated, and strangely lovely with a sudden bright expectancy—pulled the door open wider and confronted him!

For one brief instant she stood in wild amazement, staring at the uncouthly disguised figure, her soul in her eyes; and then Lord Grosvenor tore the muffler from his face, the hat from his head, and stood before her, brave, eager, noble, and impassioned, with radiant eyes and smiling lips!

How the colour fluttered up into the girl's pure cheeks, like a red light flickering through an alabaster shade! How her eyes glowed! How her fair and lovely face beamed!

Lord Grosvenor held out his arms. She sprang to them, and nestled close to his broad young breast.

"Oh, Paul! I knew you would come!" she murmured, in a happy contentment. "I knew that you were looking for me, and that you would find me!"

Her joy overflowed in happy tears.

"You are safe now, my darling!" said Lord Grosvenor, his joy as great as her own, and equally apparent. "Thank Heaven I have found you! You cannot know what I have suffered since I learned your disappearance from the Park. But the light has come at last!"

"Where is Fay?" he asked.

Giralta led him to the bedside. Fay was lying on the couch, fully dressed, her violet eyes closed in sleep, his golden hair drifting over her pillow.

"Waken him, darling!" said Grosvenor, softly. Giralta bent over the little fellow, rousing him gently. She hushed the outcry he would have made instinctively on beholding a stranger at his bedside at that hour, and with tears and smiles and blushes told him that their deliverer had come—that Lord Grosvenor was there.

Fay was awake immediately.

"Let me carry him down," suggested the young lord. "There will be fewer steps to arouse Mrs. Bittly and Rigby."

Fay assented, and Grosvenor took him up in his arms.

"Are you all ready, Giralta?" asked her lover.

"All ready, Paul, excepting my hat and cloak," answered Giralta, proceeding to don those articles. "I had not undressed. I was sleepless, and so sat up to read."

She was soon ready. Then Grosvenor, extinguishing the light, led the way downstairs, Giralta following like a shadow.

They stole along the hall, out of doors, down the garden walk, and into the road; and now the maiden began to breathe freely.

She looked up at the sky, with the gray clouds floating over it; back at the square brick house where she had endured her painful captivity; and then she clung to the young lord's arm in a transport of delight.

"Oh, Paul," she murmured, "now, indeed, I feel that I am safe."

"And so do I," put in Fay's small voice, from Grosvenor's bosom. "And if you please, Paul,

I'll get down and do my own walking. I am too old and too heavy to be carried like a child."

Grosvenor laughed, and put the boy down, keeping fast hold of his tiny hand, and the three walked on together.

"I thought it strange when you knocked so softly at my door, Paul," said Giralta, leaning on his arm. "Mrs. Bittly never knocked at all. And when you opened the door and called me, my heart seemed to leap to my mouth. But when I sprang to the door half expecting to see you, and beheld, as I supposed, Bittly, I could have died with disappointment. Where did you procure your disguise, Paul?"

"I borrowed it of Bittly himself. He is waiting for it under this hedge," responded our hero, smiling. "Wait here a moment while I exchange with him, Giralta."

The young girl halted under a tree with Fay, while Lord Grosvenor returned the borrowed garments, and took back his own.

"Where are we going now, Giralta?" asked Fay, gravely.

"I don't know," returned Giralta, contentedly. "It's all right though, Fay. Paul knows."

Her trust in her lover gave her a delicious sense of restfulness, very refreshing after her late desolation and confinement. That had been a dark day with her. Mrs. Bittly had been insolent and harsh, and had more than once, to show off her authority, declared she should shut Fay up in an entirely separate apartment—a threat which had agonised Giralta, and almost broken the little lad's heart. And now, she could hardly realise it, they were free, safe, and together!

"Paul is all well enough," remarked Fay, after a thoughtful pause, his violet eyes shining with wistful light. "He's good, Giralta, and I love him; but," and the little voice quivered, "I want mamma."

Grosvenor returned in time to hear this pitiful lament.

"Just keep up your courage, Fay, a little longer," he said, cheerfully, "and you shall see her. I promised her that I would bring you to her at ten o'clock this morning."

Fay's sobs gave way to a joyful cry.

"You promised mamma?" asked Giralta, as they walked on. "When did you see her, Paul?"

"To-day—this afternoon."

"Where is she?" she questioned.

"At Hamptonwold, only a few miles from here. Lord Hampton and Lord Trevalyan are also there." Giralta began to tremble.

"I cannot meet uncle Trevalyan!" she exclaimed.

"Paul, what does all this mean?"

"It means, darling, that the Lady Beatrice will see you secretly in her garden. She has been almost crazed about you and Fay. She received your letter, that you were in Dalton with Fay safe. I told her yesterday that you were missing again. Having company, she cannot get away to see you. I must take you both to her."

"Will this secrecy ever end?" cried Giralta, passionately. "Oh, if papa could only stand among men, stainless in name! Why must that guilty man always triumph?"

"His hour is approaching, Giralta," said her lover. "He is drawing near to the end. His very desperation proves it."

He told her then how he had sought for her; how he had received her letter; and how he had traced her to her prison.

"And papa and Herbert? They are safe in the country?"

"They are at the Eagle's Eyrie. They will be at Hamptonwold this morning—it is after midnight now. The Lady Beatrice wants to assemble her little family together once more in secret before they are again separated!"

"Poor mamma! What is going to become of us all?"

"Mr. Trevalyan will take his children abroad—you with the others, Giralta. And I shall go too, and if you will, your parents have consented that in some pleasant foreign town you and I shall be married. You will be safe from Adlowe's persecution's only as my wife. Are you willing, darling? Will you soon give me that priceless treasure?"

He bent low over her, looking like one of those debonair knights of long ago, his noble face aglow, his dusky eyes full of loving light. It was not to be wondered at that Giralta hung her head shyly, blushed, and gave an assent so timid that only ears rendered keen by love could have told the whisper from a sigh.

We will not attempt to depict the lover's rapture, nor his expression of it.

They walked along as if treading on air, forgetful of all save each other, when the lagging steps of Fay recalled the young lord to the fact that the child was growing tired.

Disregarding the little fellow's grave remonstrances, Grosvenor took him up again, and the boy dropped asleep on his shoulder.

"Where are you taking us now?" asked Giralta.

"To the inn!"

"It must be closed at this hour," said the young girl, with a sense of embarrassment growing upon her. "Oh, Paul, what will they say to our arrival at this hour, and on foot?"

"I will make it all right, Giralta," responded her young lover. "We have really no other place to go to, and we cannot spend the night out of doors. Leave it all to me!"

By this time they were nearing the outskirts of Penoced. They had met no one on the way, but now the clatter of hoofs on the road attracted their attention.

"Someone is about to meet us!" said Lord Grosvenor. "Adlowe has been sent for. It may be he! It is certainly not an hour for people to be out on ordinary pursuits!"

He looked about him. There was a gap in the hedge at one side of the road. He drew Giralta through the aperture, and they both crouched in the shadow of the hedge and watched the road.

The horseman, whose coming they had heard, came slowly around a curve in the road, and rode past them, directing his course towards Giralta's late prison.

The steed he bestrode was jaded and wet with foam. He had evidently come a considerable journey.

The face of the man was turned slightly towards them. It was the face of Lord Adlowe!

They waited until he had passed out of sight, and then emerged from their concealment.

Giralta was pale, but courageous.

"We must hasten to the inn!" said Grosvenor, quickly. "Once there, he cannot touch you. Come!"

They hurried over the road, entered the town, and reached the inn.

The landlord was in the act of closing his doors. He was already aware of the fact that his guest was noble, and a friend of the Hamptons. His inn was leased from the Lady Beatrice, it being her own private property. Her ladyship's name was therefore an "Open Sesame" to his house and heart.

"This young lady and young gentleman, landlord," said Lord Grosvenor, "are on their way to Hamptonwold by invitation of the Lady Beatrice Hampton. They have met with a misfortune by which they were obliged to complete their journey on foot. They require adjoining rooms—your best—and in the morning, about eight o'clock, a carriage and driver!"

Giralta's appearance was sufficient to proclaim her a lady. The landlord did not pause to reflect upon the singularity of her late arrival on foot, accepting Grosvenor's statement without question. Indeed, Lord Grosvenor, young as he was, was not a man whose word could be doubted.

A maid was summoned, rooms were got ready, and in half an hour Giralta and Fay were both asleep.

Unknown to them, or to anyone, Lord Grosvenor apprehensive of Adlowe's pursuit, posted himself in the hall, outside Giralta's door, and watched and waited—a sleepless, tireless sentinel.

(To be continued.)

CLINTON DEERWOOD.

CHAPTER XIII.

We left Lord Allan just as he had fallen beneath his horse in Fenlow Forest. As may be supposed, his limbs were crushed and broken when his men raised their master from the ground, and consternation took possession of their minds.

"What shall be done? Our lord is surely killed," exclaimed one to Geoffrey, Lord Allan's valet, who seemed to be that nobleman's right-hand man, to whom the other servants yielded. "What are we to do, good Geoffrey?"

"I am as perplexed as you. As you say, our master is dreadfully hurt, and there is no place to carry him to, unless it be the robber's cave itself, if we know where it lies in these thick woods," and he stooped down to examine the senseless noble's hurts.

"Well, I wouldn't care who came, or to what place we took our poor lord, if we could only get help. He may not be wholly put out of life, but I'm afraid we can't take him to the castle," cried Wilson, pitifully, for he was unused to the sight of human suffering.

"Something must be done right quick, or Lord Allan will bleed to death," said Geoffrey, tying his scarf about a severed artery, which had been cut by the sharp spurs as the horse rolled over him. "Go you, Wilson, and hunt up help, while I try to keep the breath of life in him. And fly like a stag, for there is scarcely a beat of my lord's heart to be found. And there be more wounds than one," and Geoffrey loosed the garments of his master, and attempted to examine the gaping wounds.

The man to whom he had spoken immediately set out through the deep woods in quest of aid, and hoping now, as sincerely as he had hitherto wished not to see the outlaw chief, that he should come upon him or some of his men. For perhaps a quarter of an hour he pressed forward, following what appeared to be a tiny, serpentine path, and then found that it led him nigh a running stream, which sparkled and chattered along over its pebbly bed of stone. As yet he had not seen trace of any human being, and felt that he was alone in the surrounding solitude.

Several wild partridges went whirring over his head as he advanced, and for a moment they affrighted him with their sudden flight. He saw numberless squirrels nimbly scampering from bough to bough of the tall forest trees, and they hid themselves, chattering at the intrusion, as he went past. He saw also a snake or two go gliding through the green, tufted grass which grew in some portions of his path, and as his eyes caught sight of their shiny undulating lengths, the man involuntarily crossed himself and muttered his prayers, and trod faster on his way, till finally he paused upon the bank of a crystal stream, and found that it barred his farther passage in that direction.

"I shall have my pains for nothing, and be compelled to turn back to my dying master without help, if so be I am fortunate enough to reach his presence alive myself," muttered the man, as he paused, and stood looking at the clear water before him.

Then he added, as he turned about and began to look for the backward path :

"I might have known that this outlaw chief would never be found when he was wanted, but I'll warrant me, if there had been no need for his services, he would have overhauled us long ago on our way."

And the man was now looking earnestly for traces of the tiny path which had led him through the wood to the opening.

"Who is it that speakest thus boldly of the outlaw chief, for I perceive no one that needs immediate service, save thyself, my bold fellow, and I should judge that thou hadst but lost thy way, and only needed to be righted in it?" questioned a deep voice, which sounded close behind the man, and caused him to start in terror, and look around. Then, perceiving that it was Giles Fenlow—for he recognised the chief at once by his suit of Lincoln green and hat with waving plume—the man replied, not without some embarrassment, however, and in a meek, respectful tone :

"Oh, it is thee, Lord Giles Fenlow, and I am in search of thee, for my master, Lord Allan, has just fallen from his horse in the forest, and now lies dying at some distance from here. I have set out, hoping to find thee or some of thy band, trusting that you would give us aid in our extreme need; for Lord Allan cannot be taken home, and may even now be dead, or dying of his serious wounds."

"Lead me to him. I will goat once; for a fallen enemy must be treated even as a friend by Giles Fenlow," said the outlaw, as he came forward and stood ready for the journey.

But the man paused, and, looking about with perplexed gaze, said, in some doubt :

"I have lost my way, I think, for I cannot tell which place I came from when I broke from the wood and came upon the stream."

The outlaw smiled, but he only said :

"Tell me, my good fellow, the direction in which thou camest, and I will venture to lead thee to thy master's side."

His companion pointed towards the deep wood, saying :

"I believed it was that way, my lord; but for the life of me, I am so bewildered that I cannot tell for a certainty."

"Well, follow me, then. Giles Fenlow is pretty well acquainted with these woods, and will venture to assist thee now, good fellow, to thy master," and the outlaw entered the forest defiles, and motioned his companion to follow his lead.

The other did so, and it was not long before the two came out at the point where Lord Allan lay, inanimate and bleeding. Geoffrey still knelt beside his master, and had succeeded in binding a handkerchief over the wound, but the blood still trickled down, and had formed quite a pool beside the injured nobleman's side.

When Giles Fenlow sprang through the wood, and beheld the spectacle before him, his features at once expressed concern and pity, and he immediately was beside Lord Allan, kneeling upon the tufted grass, and looking upon the features of the inanimate nobleman. He placed his ear to his master's breast, as he had done once, years ago, when he had come so nigh to committing that fearful crime of murder. He raised his head, and felt for the pulse which came so fitfully, at long intervals. Then, after satisfying himself that there was sufficient life to warrant a removal, he said, in calm voice, to Geoffrey, who stood close at his side :

"Raise thy master up, and bear him gently to the place to which I shall lead."

The men took up the injured nobleman, and followed Giles Fenlow through the forest to the bank of the little stream where Wilson had met the outlaw chief. Then Giles Fenlow said, in authoritative tones :

"Place Lord Allan down upon the greensward, my good fellows, and I will attend to his farther safety and final recovery. I have need of you no longer, and will dispense with your farther services. But I will see that ye are escorted safely through this wood, till ye are within sight of Fenlow Castle again."

The men laid their master upon the greensward, as Giles Fenlow had directed, but they were not satisfied with the outlaw's disposal of themselves, and Geoffrey ventured to say :

"Do not send us away from our master, I pray thee, noble Giles Fenlow, for we feel sorrow for his sad state, and wish to stay to assist in his recovery, if he be so fortunate as to survive his dreadful wounds."

"Canst thou not trust Lord Allan to me? Have I not already given evidence of my good-will towards the nobleman, that thou art not now satisfied with my plans?" questioned the outlaw, with stern voice, looking at the men as he spoke.

"Yes, we know we can trust thy word, noble chief, but then our master is dear to us, and it would look ill for us to return to Fenlow Castle without him, leaving him when he is unconscious without him, leaving him when he is unconscious and wounded. What would be said of us at home, and what would Lord Allan think when he recovers to consciousness again?" said Geoffrey, speaking for the others.

"Thou needst not fear that thy master will think ill of you, my good fellows, for Giles Fenlow will explain all that to him, saying it was his will, not thine, that sent thee away. And this tale will also do for those at the castle. But say to them, also, that the outlaw chief will nurse Lord Allan back to life and strength again, even as he would were he his own father who might have been brought to him wounded and dying," replied the outlaw. Then he added, "Now, my men, I will have ye go back a distance into the forest, and wait while I send some of my men to guide ye safely on your homeward journey," and saying thus, Giles Fenlow motioned them to turn back into the forest, while he looked to see that his order was obeyed.

A few moments later he sounded his bugle note, and therupon there came a score or more of his band to his presence. Some of these he sent after Lord Allan's retainers, bidding them escort these men to the edge of the wood. Then, selecting two of the remaining others, he bade them lift Lord Allan and bear him gently into their cavern home.

Several hours after this, the wounded nobleman opened his eyes, and looked about him in questioning amazement. He attempted to rise, but fell back upon the soft cushions of the couch whereon he lay with a heavy groan of anguish, which brought Giles Fenlow immediately to his bedside.

For several moments the nobleman lay still, with closed eyes, trying to stifle the throes of pain, and endeavouring to fathom his situation. He slowly unclosed his eyelids again, and beheld Giles Fenlow bending over him, with tender, commiserating face.

"Where am I, and why are you here, Giles Fenlow?" questioned the nobleman, in faint voice, as he lay quiet from helplessness.

"You have been wounded, Lord Allan, and I was solicited by thy men to give thee a shelter and Christian aid, and so I have had thee brought to my home, and now hope to nurse thee to returning strength again," replied the outlaw, in a pitying tone.

"I do not understand thee, Giles Fenlow. Where is Geoffrey and my faithful Wilson? They surely would not leave their master in the hands of an enemy, and he the dreaded outlaw of Fenlow Forest! How came I to be hurt, and in thy home? Answer me with truth, Giles Fenlow, and say what false trick thou hast been playing upon me," gasped out the nobleman, in weak yet authoritative tones.

"Thou art mistaken, Lord Allan. I have played no trick upon thee or thy men, neither would I harm thee or aught of thine. But, on the contrary, I would succour and aid thee. And I tell thee now that one of thy men sought me out in the forest, and entreated me to assist thee. You had been thrown under your horse, and seriously injured, and it was far away from your castle. So I went to thee, and bade the men bring thee nigh my home. Then I sent them away with some of my good fellows to guide them to your castle, for I had no wish to make my retreat known to thy retainers. You were brought here, and are now an inhabitant of my home, and I shall do my utmost to make your unavoidable stay here as comfortable and pleasant as possible," explained Giles Fenlow.

Lord Allan could but believe the tale which was spoken with such kindness and sincerity by the

outlaw chief, and he now felt that he was in the hands of one whom he had injured to such an extent that he could expect nothing but ill-treatment in return. But Giles Fenlow's voice was kind, and his face expressive of deepest pity and even tenderness, as he now asked gently, when the other turned away with a groan :

"Are you suffering much, Lord Allan? I have had thy wounds dressed, and have administered a sleeping potion, but I find you more restless than I expected when I came in just now, and will give you another quieting powder, so that the pain will be deadened, and you can rest in peace awhile," and he hastened to a little table near, and, mixing a potion of medicine, brought it to Lord Allan's bedside, and stood ready to administer it.

But the nobleman turned away his head, while a choking sensation came into his throat. This unexpected kindness of his injured kinsman was greater than he could bear, and he gasped out entreatingly :

"Go away from me, Giles Fenlow! I cannot bear thy tenderness! Leave me in quiet to die of my wounds, or strike me with thy strong hands, for I cannot live to look upon thy forgiving face."

But Giles Fenlow only smiled, while he did not turn away. Then he said in a calm tone, which soothed the ear of his companion :

"I cannot leave you, Lord Allan, for you are seriously hurt, and need my care. Believe me, when I say that I have forgiven you that long-gone injury which changed my life so greatly. Let the past lie dead between us. Trust me to nurse thee back to health; and now take this potion, for you are seriously in need of rest."

But still Lord Allan put the cup away from him. There were other thoughts save the differences between him and Giles Fenlow within his breast, and he said, in tremulous accents :

"I entreat thee to go away and let me die, for I have nothing now left to live for. My daughter is gone—none know whither. Sir Clinton Deerwood has me within his power, if she be not found and made to wed him. My search after her has been vain, and I can never hope to find happiness again in life."

"If I tell thee that the Lady Genifrede is safe and well, wilt thou make effort to live?" questioned the outlaw, at once determined to set the mind of his kinsman at rest.

"If thou sayest it, I should wish to credit it, but how could I fully do so, when I know that the Lady Genifrede is far away from here, and that neither thou nor I know aught of her abiding-place?" replied the nobleman, sadly.

But just at this moment there came a slender female figure into the apartment, and Lord Allan's eyes grew wide with bewilderment amazement, for the Lady Genifrede threw herself beside his couch, and clasped his hands with joyful eagerness, as she cried out impulsively :

"My father! oh, my poor suffering father! I could not longer remain away from thy bedside."

Lord Allan turned his eyes from her to Giles Fenlow, and the latter immediately replied, in explanation :

"Do not fear to credit the evidence of thine eyes, Lord Allan, for this is truly the Lady Genifrede, whom I met in the forest on her journey towards the convent of St. Mary, in Chalons, and persuaded to remain in my cavern home. Thinking it preferable to a life-long immurement in the convent, or a bridal with Sir Clinton, my cousin Genifrede has consented and intends henceforth to have her dwelling with the outlaw and his band."

If Lord Allan had possessed sufficient strength of body, it is probable he would at once have expressed his abhorrence and utter distaste of these sentiments uttered by Giles Fenlow. But the conversation had already taxed his powers too greatly, and he now closed his eyes in almost unconscious weakness. The outlaw chief perceived this, and immediately raised the nobleman and forced the prepared potion between his lips. Then he laid him gently back upon the pillows, and whispered the Lady Genifrede that her father was too weak for conversation, and would sleep if she retired.

"Go to your room, and rest, Genifrede; thine eyes are already weary with the vigils taken since thy father came hither. I will remain and watch by Lord Allan's bedside, and alleviate every suffering that can be cured by physician's skill," he said, as he raised the girl from her kneeling position, and led her to the door. And so the Lady Genifrede went out, and Giles Fenlow was left to watch beside the sufferer.

CHAPTER XIV.

SIR CLINTON DEERWOOD vowed all manner of revenge against Giles Fenlow and his band, after having been sent on his return by the outlaw chief. His heart was filled with such anger that he made oath that the outlaw of Fenlow Forest should swing from the gibbet in a month; and he at once set about securing the fulfilment of his revenge.



[THE MEETING OF FATHER AND DAUGHTER.]

He went to the king; and, after obtaining audience, related with specious word-colouring the bold indignity this lawless ranger of the wood had put upon him, in deterring him from the pursuit of his affianced bride; and he entreated his sovereign to provide for him a suitable retinue of soldiery wherewith he might capture this insolent ranger of Fenlow Forest, and bring him to just punishment.

The king listened to the noble's representation, and at once complied with his request, giving him permission to take as large a force of the royal men-at-arms as he desired for his purpose.

"For, by my faith!" cried the monarch, "we must make an example of this bold outlaw, who is getting all too troublesome for our peace and the safety of our kingdom! Who knows but he may next take a fancy for our own royal crown-piece?" and he lifted his hand to the kingly head whereon rested the jewelled diadem of England. "And I thank thee right heartily, my good and loyal Sir Clinton, for thus bringing the matter before our notice!" he added.

The delighted noble bowed his gratitude as his sovereign listened to and granted his request, feeling sure that there now stood no obstacle in his path towards the fulfilment of his revenge.

A week later a company of men set forth from London with Sir Clinton Deerwood at their head, and rode in the direction of Fenlow Forest. A price had been set upon Giles Fenlow's head by the king; and each one who rode forward inwardly hoped to become the fortunate possessor of the prize-money. But Sir Clinton Deerwood was actuated by no such sordid motives. It was only revenge which slumbered in his heart. That, and a hope to wrest from Giles Fenlow a knowledge of the Lady Genifreda's whereabouts urged him forward; and he had given strict orders to his men that on no account were they to kill the outlaw chief, but to take him a living captive.

And so the men rode forth; and again Sir Clinton entered the forest, and came nigh the place where he had parted from Giles Fenlow. But nothing met their advance save the scared birds and other untamed inhabitants of the wood; and for days the men searched these forest depths without coming nigh to the accomplishment of their mission. At length some grew tired of this unsuccessful journey, and began to murmur and complain of an errand which looked so unpromising; and they hinted that Giles Fenlow could never be taken in this manner. He was too wily a fox to be caught, except by strategy; and so they would counsel Sir Clinton to give up the undertaking, and leave Giles Fenlow to his own ways.

Sir Clinton grew angry and wrathful at these suggestions. He grieved, too, over his defeat; for he had fully expected to meet Giles Fenlow, either alone or surrounded by his band; and he had determined to do valiant battle rather than return without the outlaw. But the discontent of his men grew more evident. For nearly two weeks now they had searched this forest, and it seemed as though there was no spot left whereon their feet had not trodden; and yet there were no signs of the outlaw or his abode.

"We will not give up the hunt in this manner, my good fellows," said Sir Clinton one day, after listening to their discontented murmurings, and now for the first time noticing them by word. "Grant us one more week's hearty search, and then if Giles Fenlow be not found we will give over the task as useless, and return to our homes."

The men gave assent to this, though some of their number ventured to say that the whole affair was useless—the outlaw would never be discovered.

But Sir Clinton had gained his point; and he now separated his men, as he had often done before, into detached parties, and sent them in different directions into the woods. With himself he took Damon and some half-dozen more sturdy fellows, and struck into a route before him and rode forward during the remaining portion of the day.

Suddenly they were startled by the flight of a deer which came rushing into their midst, staggered, and fell bleeding to the ground. Sir Clinton sprang immediately from his steed, with the exclamation:

"Ah! This means something! The deer is wounded by some of Giles Fenlow's men; for see here, Damon; there is an arrow in its side!" and he knelt beside the animal, which was struggling upon the ground where it had fallen.

Damon sprang from his horse and had gained his master's side, when there appeared a new comer upon the scene. It was Halbert, Alfretha's lover, who had sent the arrow to the breast of the deer, and now came rushing after the stricken, dying animal, and came full upon Sir Clinton and his men before being aware of their presence.

Sir Clinton at once sprang upon the outlaw, calling him, and attempting to throw him to the ground, at the same time calling upon Damon to assist him in the task. But Halbert, though taken by surprise, and at disadvantage, was not so easily captured. He threw off the strong hand of Sir Clinton, and then dealt right and left well-aimed blows at the minions whom Sir Clinton set upon him; and had gained such advantage over his foes as would have proved them his victor, when the tide was turned against him by the arrival of

another squad of Sir Clinton's men. Then the outlaw placed a tiny bugle, similar to that worn by Giles Fenlow, to his lips, and blew a shrill blast upon it. He had barely time to do this before he was grasped from behind by Sir Clinton, who had come up unperceived by Halbert, and now again held him in his vice-like grasp.

The outlaw struggled bravely, but it was all in vain; he was but one, and there were a dozen against him, and he could only trust for escape now to the call he had sounded upon his little bugle.

And he had not long to wait. There was help nigh; for just when Sir Clinton, assisted by his men, had pinned his arms, and was about placing his captive upon one of the horses, the outlaw chief, followed by a host of his brave band, broke into the midst of the greatly surprised and discomfited group.

"Release the man you hold, Sir Clinton Deerwood, or thy penalty be upon thine own head!" was the cry.

Sir Clinton only laughed scornfully, leaped upon his horse, and struck his spurs deep into its flanks, and dashed away into the wood, bearing the captured man with him in his flight.

But again the ringing voice called out, as the chieftain raised his carbine, and took aim:

"Stop, Sir Clinton; or thy death be upon thyself: for I will rescue my good Halbert, if at the sacrifice of thy life."

But the rider took no heed of his command. He had in his power too valuable a captive to give up lightly. This fellow might know his master's secrets; at all events he could make use of him as a guide to his haunts in the forest; and so, without turning, he urged his steed through the undergrowth and pressed on his way.

But he was not thus to escape. A sharp report rang out upon the air; and then Sir Clinton felt a quick, stinging pain in his side; his hands loosed their grasp upon his horse's reins, and he sank backward to the ground.

Then all was confusion in the wood. Sir Clinton's men, perceiving their master fall, immediately fled in terror, thinking they too would speedily share his fate; and they dashed onward through the woods with many a scratch and brush from the overhanging trees, till they paused at length, a long distance from this spot, and dared to take breath before again pressing on to the point where they expected to meet the other parties belonging to their company. We will not follow them, but return to Sir Clinton and Halbert, whom the former had secured to the back of his horse.

(To be continued.)



DANGEROUS GROUND; or, SHE WOULD BE A COUNTESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Heart's Content," "Tempting Fortune," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison the worst are those
That to our folly or our guilt we owe. Burns.

AMANDA was of opinion that the Earl of Montargis exaggerated his danger. There was no doubt his life was drawing towards its close; but she anticipated he would live longer than he expected. Now that she had committed the act of fraud and treachery described in the last chapter, she was eager and anxious for his death. She dreaded lest he should inform his son and the other members of his family how he had bequeathed his fortune, show them the will, and so enable them to discover the wrong which had been attempted to be perpetrated on them.

Her agony of mind was so great that she spoke with difficulty, and she was so fearful of being found out that if anyone looked at her more intently than usual, she imagined that she would the next moment be accused of the crime which she had, in obedience to the dictates of her ambition, committed.

She dismissed old Blarrid, who withdrew from the sick-chamber with her accustomed complaisance, and sought the housekeeper's room, where a select council, consisting of the steward, the groom of the chambers, the butler, and the housekeeper were assembled over a bottle of very fine crusted port and a currant cake.

"Any change?" asked Mrs. Barton, the housekeeper, as old Blarrid entered.

"Same as usual, ma'am," replied the nurse. "He'll last a few days yet, perhaps, but he's booked, for all that. I've had a little experience, and I can in general tell. If there's no excitement, he'll last; but my Lord Mayland is sent for, and the interview is to be strictly private, so there is something in the wind, and I won't answer for the consequences."

"Ah!" said the butler, sententiously, "if all they say be true, he'll have something to answer for. I can't explain my meaning any more, for I've only heard rumours myself, and we all know what rumours are."

[HIDE AND SEEK.]

"Never mind rumours, Mr. Martin," exclaimed the housekeeper; "will the earl's death make any change in the household? I should imagine not; though there ought to be pensions to old servants. Mr. and Mrs. Nash, the steward, and Mr. Garway, the groom of the chambers, have been here a-many years, and it is time we should quit if we want to establish ourselves in business before we are too old for it."

And Mrs. Barton, the housekeeper, looked at Mr. Garway, the groom of the chambers, in a way which clearly said, "If you'll have me, I'll have you."

"Two suits of mourning is a sure thing," remarked the nurse Blarrid.

But her further observations were cut short, as her low way of looking at eventualities did not please the upper servants, who had far grander ideas. They expected legacies; the mourning was a matter of perfect indifference to them.

While this sort of conversation was taking place downstairs, Amanda had conducted Lord Mayland to the earl's bed-chamber, he having been unwilling to enter before he was fully aware that his father's condition was such as to enable him to do so without fear of aggravating his malady.

In order to keep out the draught, a rich mooren curtain had been hung upon an iron rod placed over the door of the earl's bed-room, and Amanda, who was extremely desirous of overhearing the conversation of the earl and his son, determined to hide behind it while pretending to shut the door and retire.

Hers was a bold and adventurous disposition, and though she used her daring for a bad purpose she did not do anything by halves. Having ushered Lord Mayland into the presence of his father, she withdrew, and, opening the door, pretended to shut it, though she remained behind the curtain and within earshot.

Peeping at one extremity, she saw his lordship approach the earl, who was just able to extend an attenuated hand to him, and say, in a voice which was weak and laboured:

"It was kind of you to come so soon. I wanted to see you before I die, because I intend to disclose a secret which has been weighing heavily on my mind for many years. If you had not come in time to receive my confidence, I should have let it die with me. Sit down near me, Mayland. I am weak—more so, perhaps, than you imagine, and you must make allowance for my imperfect delivery. I will be as explicit and as little tedious as I can."

Lord Mayland said a few words of an encouraging nature, and sat down as he was told, looking anxious

rather than curious, and waited for his father to speak.

"It would startle you," the Earl of Montargis went on, "if I were to tell you that I never have had, nor will you at my death, have any right to the title which I bear. But stop; are we alone?"

"Quite," answered Lord Mayland, hoarsely. "Miss Garraway accompanied me here, but I saw her go away, and I heard her shut the door after her."

At these words Amanda laid her hand upon the handle of the door, so as to be ready to beat an immediate retreat should his lordship look round the room or examine the curtains near the door behind which she was concealed, so as to verify the truth of his declaration that they were alone together, father and son, with none to interrupt or overhear them.

"Mayland," the earl continued, "you may well look startled. So long as a certain person lives, I have no right to the title of Montargis; and if I have not, it follows that you are equally without any right—does it not?"

"I admit your logic, father," said Lord Mayland, much astonished, "but I await your facts before I say anything in reply. I can scarcely believe that I am in my right senses, or that I am not listening to the ravings of delirium."

"Would to heaven that you were, my son!" replied the Earl of Montargis, solemnly. "Better—far better would it be for you. As for me, I have lived my allotted span, or nearly, and the brunt of the battle, if there is to be any fight, falls not on me. I coveted the earldom, I coveted the estates belonging to it, and the position it would confer upon me; yet, while my brother lived, I had no hope."

"But your brother Stanley died?" said Lord Mayland.

"He did. It was the visitation of God. I had nothing to do with it. No; that was not the result of any crime of mine," cried the earl, speaking more quickly, and with more distinctness, as he warmed with his subject. "But you will remember that he had a son. Stanley had a son, who was christened Noel."

"Yes," said Mayland, thoughtfully, "I have heard of that. The son of whom you speak disappeared, and everyone supposes him dead."

"I know him to be living!" exclaimed the earl, starting up in the bed by an extraordinary effort, resting himself on his elbows, and glaring at his son with the wildness of one out of his senses.

"Living!" ejaculated Lord Mayland, aghast.

"It is a fact—he lives! It was I who stole him,

and he lives to trouble you, Mayland, if you are not careful, as he would have troubled me had I given him a chance. You have often wondered, I dare say, why I had occasional fits of melancholy, why my mind was absorbed and abstracted. That young man lay like an incubus upon me. I dared not kill him. I had not the courage. I am only a half-and-half villain, after all. I could rob him of his inheritance, and shut him up in a lunatic asylum, where they killed his mind, so that he is accounted mad by some; but I dared not kill him."

He paused, and shuddered visibly.

Lord Mayland regarded him with apparent horror, and yet was so deeply interested in his tale that he leant over the bed in order to hear it more distinctly.

"Where is this young man now?" he asked. "If you want to put me on my guard, and enable me to perpetuate your pol'ey, you should enable me to find my enemy. I know not how to act until I have had time to reflect; but at all events it will be a source of great consolation, after what you have said, to hear where my cousin, the son of my uncle Stanley, the real Earl of Montargis, is living. Your revelation will be incomplete unless you can give me some information respecting him."

"You shall hear everything," answered the earl, with the same feverish exhibition of unwatched and, to him, injurious excitement. "Purase the same cause as I have done. Keep him in subjection; make him afraid of you. At present he knows nothing, but he has friends, and if they could discover his whereabouts, you would have a hard fight for the title. Your position would not be worth a year's purchase."

"Who and where is he?" pursued Lord Mayland, bending forward with increased anxiety depicted on his pallid countenance.

"He—he—" began the Earl of Montargis, but a deathly pallor overspread his face, which in its appearance matched that of his son; "he is—"

It was in vain he struggled to utter any more words; his strength had been waning, and though it would, had he economised it, have lasted some time longer, he had exhausted it in the effort he made to take Lord Mayland into his confidence, and, sinking back upon his pillows, he breathed heavily and became insensible.

His son bent over him, to catch any whisper that might come from his livid lips. Amanda looked out from behind the curtain in her intense anxiety to hear more.

Both were disappointed. In a few minutes the breathing ceased; an expression of anguish distorted the earl's face, the dying man was incapable of further utterance. There was a convulsive struggle, and all was over.

The remainder of the secret of the Earl of Montargis had died with him.

CHAPTER XIII.

Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and order'd gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.

She strove against her weakness,
Though at times her spirits sank;
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
To all duties of her rank. *Tennyson.*

It is difficult to say who was the most annoyed at the sudden cessation of the earl's speech, both Amanda and Lord Mayland being deeply interested in the recital, and it is not too much to assert that for a few moments his lordship was more concerned at not hearing the whole of the confidence which would have been placed in him than he was at the fearfully sudden death of his parent. Better for Lord Mayland's peace of mind if the earl had not spoken. The incomplete revelation had created a spectre standing in his path; but though he knew a real danger menaced him, he did not know how to attack it, or where to look for its appearance.

If, on the other hand, he was desirous of being an honest man and making restitution, he was unable to do so, as all he knew was that the young man, Noel, the son of Stanley, his uncle, lived; but where to find him, he had no idea; he was even ignorant of the name he bore among men; and it was with a mind dreadfully oppressed with a weight of care that he drew the coverlid over the face of his father, whose pulse was motionless and whose heart had ceased to beat.

Feeling assured that there was nothing more to hear, Amanda stole away from her place of concealment, and went downstairs to turn over in her mind all that she had heard, and wonder in what way she could utilise the knowledge she had gained. It was a thousand pities that the earl had not completed his confession; but, at all events, she knew as much as Lord Mayland.

Her reflections were cut short by the entrance of the latter, who, in feeling terms, announced the melancholy event which had just taken place, and

which Amanda affected to hear with surprise, though she knew all about it as well as he did himself.

On the following morning the Countess of Montargis, accompanied by her daughters, arrived at the Park, having travelled all night. They were deeply grieved at the sad intelligence which awaited them, but matters of business soon occupied the mind of the countess, who was for some time closeted with her solicitor and her son.

The legal gentleman was named Norton, and was a Nunington practitioner. He was not a man of brilliant parts, but he had a quiet manner which passed for wisdom, though it was in reality the offspring of wisdom, and his great peculiarity was that he would never commit himself to an opinion unless it was driven into a corner.

The interview took place in the dining-room after luncheon, the cloth and its contents remaining on the table. The Ladies Gwendoline and Selina, with Amanda, had retired to another room, to discuss the interesting question of mourning, which always occupies the attention of ladies more or less before a funeral, and Amanda, who was competent to give advice on this difficult subject, did so with a taste and wealth of description which the compiler of a book of fashions might have envied.

"You ask me, my lady," began Mr. Norton, sipping his sherry, "if I think the late earl left a will. I do not like to hazard a definitive opinion, but I know a will was made. Now, this proves nothing. A man may make a dozen wills, and burn them all. The mere fact of a will having been in existence some years ago is of no value to us. What we want to know is this—is there a will in being now?—eh, my lord? oh, my lady? Is not that the point?"

"Certainly it is," replied the Countess of Montargis, adding, "My poor husband was not fond of talking about business matters, and it would have been indecorous for me to urge upon him the necessity—or shall I say the propriety—of making adequate provision for me. He threw out hints occasionally that he had done so. What, sir, was the nature of the will that you drew?"

"I should be sorry to speak positively about any particular document," answered Mr. Norton, in his roundabout way, "because my will, if I may call it so, has probably been superseded by another, and I should create impressions which it would be difficult to remove. However, there was a will prepared in my office, and prepared according to special and written order. The Earl of Montargis had entrusted me to bequeath all his personality to one individual. His son—meaning you, my lord—he said was well provided for with the entailed property. The individual to whom the testator left his shares in public companies, his funded stock, and money lying at his bankers', was charged to pay the Ladies Gwendoline and Selina Mayland the sum of one thousand a-year until their marriage, for I well remember the deceased telling me that no man should marry his girls for money."

"He had, I know, peculiar views on that subject," exclaimed the countess, who showed some signs of impatience. "And now, Mr. Norton, you need make no further mystery about the matter. I presume the person to whom the personality was thus left is myself? It would be quite in accordance with my expectations and the expressed intentions of my late husband."

"I am utterly unable to gratify your ladyship's curiosity," said the attorney. "No name was inserted in the will at my office, nor did I hear any name mentioned. A blank was left purposely, so that his lordship might fill it up himself before he died, or at his leisure and inclination."

"Bless me!" cried the countess, in a tone of alarm. "Has any search been made for this singular document, or any one of a similar nature? If not, it is time something should be made. I hope you will not accuse me of indecent haste, but, while the living should respect the dead, there is a duty they owe to themselves which it is wrong to neglect."

"It is usual in these melancholy cases, my lady," exclaimed Mr. Norton, "to place seals upon anything which contains papers or articles of value, and that I have already done; but I will, in your presence, make a search for a will, since you seem to have no knowledge of the existence of one, and I trust that the result of our inquiry will be as agreeable as you could wish, though I beg you to bear in mind that I have not committed myself to any definitive opinion which may raise extravagant expectations in the mind of anyone, though I must add that the custom is to make known the will of the deceased after the funeral, when all the relatives are assembled together."

"Do as you please, Mr. Norton," said the countess, whose mind was sorely troubled, she knew not why. "Proceed to the apartments occupied by the earl without me, if you please, Lord May and will accompany you. I am not strong enough to go through

such an undertaking. Oh! by the way, Mayland who was with the earl before you arrived?"

"Miss Garraway, I believe, and the nurse, an old woman from Fonthills recommended by Mrs. Barton, our housekeeper. I am not aware that anyone else had access to my father's chamber, and I am informed by them that he was well attended to, and allowed to want nothing."

"Of course they would speak in their own praise," said the countess. "However, we will not do them the injustice to suppose that they spoke falsely. Will you kindly send this old woman to me, if she is in the house. I should like to put a few questions to her, which, if she answers them satisfactorily, will assist my reflections. Let her come in here."

Lord Mayland promised that she should be sent to his mother directly, if she were in the house, and if not, a message should be despatched to bring her from the village as soon as possible. But it happened that old Blarrid had been a nurse for some time, and she did not consider that her engagement terminated until the funeral had taken place; then, and only then, were her services to be dispensed with.

In a time of general sorrow, much latitude was allowed to her, and, in fact, to everybody, and she found her perquisites more numerous during the week which preceded the funeral than they were before the death of her patient. She had anticipated an order so wait upon the countess, and was prepared. She wore her best black dress and a cap trimmed with black ribbons, and entered the room with her hands behind her, making a low courtesy which caused her apron to touch the ground.

"You are the nurse who attended upon the Earl of Montargis?" exclaimed the countess, as Blarrid stood before her, and eying her sharply to see what her disposition was; but there was nothing but vacancy portrayed upon the fat, stolid face of the nurse, who, in reply, made another bow as profound as the first. "Have you anything to tell me?" continued her ladyship. "I mean, did my husband give you any message for me, or speak to you on any matter of business? Be frank with me. I shall know how to reward you if I find that you are worthy of my countenance and support."

"No, my lady," rejoined old Blarrid, keeping her eyes fixed on the ground. "The earl said nothing, and there was no business mentioned except a paper which I had to sign. I was asleep in the chair until the governess woke me, and, putting a pen in my hand, told me I had to sign something as a witness, and the earl—poor, dear gentleman!—told me where to put my name, but what it was all about I did not hear. Perhaps Miss Garraway will be able to give your ladyship more information than I can. I can assure your ladyship that everything was done that could be done, and, if you had been here, you would, I am proud to think, have entirely approved of everything."

"Thank you," said the countess; "that will do. Please tell one of the servants to desire Miss Garraway to wait upon me. I shall not omit to reward you for your services. I suppose Mrs. Barton knows where to find you if you should be wanted? Very well. You can go."

The nurse took her departure with a peculiar smile upon her puckered lips, and the countess paced the room impatiently until Amanda entered. She, too, was dressed in black, wearing a silk dress and a jacket of the same material over a woolen garbaldi. She was always neat and simple in her attire rather than gaudy, for she knew that any attempt at display on her part would soon be extinguished by the extensive wardrobe of the countess and her daughters, who sometimes spent more in a month on dress than her salary amounted to in a whole year.

"Pray sit down, Miss Garraway," said the countess. "I have been so busy with my solicitor, and so dreadfully upset by the terrible event which has taken place, that I have had no opportunity until now of thanking you for your kindness to my dear husband. I do so now, however, and hope he has remembered you in some substantial way in his will; if not, rest assured I will supply the omission."

"I hardly know how to thank your ladyship for your kindness," answered Amanda, who with difficulty suppressed a smile; "your eulogy is really more than I deserve. It is true that I did my best to minister to his lordship's wants, in which endeavour I was ably seconded by Mrs. Blarrid, the nurse, whom I can recommend to your ladyship as an experienced and worthy woman. I need scarcely say that I did not expect any reward for what I did, though the earl himself on several occasions told me that he felt himself indebted to me, not only for nursing him in his last illness, but for attending to the education of his daughters in what he was pleased to call an effectual and praiseworthy manner. Indeed, his expressions of gratitude were so cordial that I was at a loss to account for it all."

"Perhaps," rejoined the countess, with a slight

elevation of the eyebrows, "the earl was not conscious of what he was saying. I do not wish to disengage you for an instant, Miss Garraway, but—" "I can assure your ladyship," interrupted Amanda, "that the Earl of Montargis never lost consciousness, and that his faculties were perfectly clear up to the time he sent me for Lord Mayland, and his lordship will confirm what I say."

"It is very sad, under these circumstances, to think that his illness terminated so disastrously and so suddenly," said the countess, who could not refrain from biting her lips. "It would have given me a consolation which I need not stop to describe to you to have been with him at the last. But perhaps you can give me some message from him, or, at least, tell me what took place during the last three or four days of his life. Can you do this? If so, I am prepared to listen to you, and shall feel grateful for any communication which you have to make to me."

"The earl was singularly reticent," answered Amanda. "He did not in any way take me into his confidence, nor did he entrust me with any message to you. Lord Mayland was with him when he died, and probably he would be the person to whom the earl would speak on private and family matters. The only service of any importance which I was asked to perform was to take a paper out of a cabinet, which is signed in my presence and that of the nurse. We both witnessed it at his request, though we were entirely ignorant of its contents, and afterwards I put it back again in its place. I have little doubt your solicitor has found it by this time."

The countess thanked Amanda for her information, and, seeing that she knew no more, did not press her. They continued in conversation until Lord Mayland and Mr. Norton came down, when Amanda discreetly withdrew, though she did not think it beneath her dignity to stay outside and put her ear to the keyhole to overhear the conversation. This was of a nature calculated to be eminently satisfactory to her.

Mr. Norton declared that he had found a will, which he had in his possession, but he had not opened or read it, thinking it best to read it openly in due form after the funeral. He begged her ladyship's pardon for gratifying her curiosity, and she, who felt secure, did not press him, but rather commanded him for his punctilio. No other document of similar importance had been found, and Mr. Norton went away with the precious parchment in his possession. The countess, who knew him to be a thoroughly trustworthy man, was rather glad that he went, as she was perfectly safe in his hands. She and her son remained together until it was dark, when they retired to dress for dinner.

A week quickly passed, and great preparations were made for the funeral. The Earl of Montargis was to be buried in the family vault in Fonthill Church. Invitations had been issued to the relatives of the deceased, as well as to his intimate friends. The day broke gloomily. Great banks of clouds were drifting up from the south-west, driven by a strong wind, which momentarily increased in violence. Rain fell at an early hour and continued to fall at intervals, making the air cold and wintry and the ground wet and muddy. The blast moaned dismally through the branches of the leafless trees, and the rain, which after eleven o'clock fell with pitiless persistence, considerably diminished the number of spectators in the road near the park and the approaches to the churchyard, though the church itself was well filled. The countess and her daughters insisted upon following in a funeral coach, which they had to themselves, Amanda preferring to remain at home, out of no disrespect to the deceased, but because she felt that she would be somewhat out of place with the near relatives of the earl.

In addition to this scruple, which was, after all, rather more imaginary than real, she was on thorns to know how the Countess of Montargis would act when the will was read. The shock would be so complete that she anticipated some diversion from her ladyship's behaviour on the occasion, and her mind was very busy until the *cortege* returned.

Once she went into the dining-room, where old Blarri and the housekeeper were engaged in assisting the butler in laying out the table to the best advantage for the cold collation which was prepared for those who liked to partake of it after the funeral, and she was rather surprised when the nurse exclaimed, in a significant tone:

"I should like to speak to you, miss, after the fuss is over—say about five o'clock. Don't disappoint me, and I'll meet you in your bed-room. You can easily slip away without anyone seeing you."

"What can you have to say to me which you cannot say here?" answered Amanda, almost angrily, and she was about to refuse compliance with her request when she remembered that Blarri witnessed the will, and was in the room when she committed the daring forgery, the result of the announcement of which she awaited with such feverish impatience,

So she checked her inclination to be uncivil to the old woman, and continued, "Well—well, I will be there to receive you, nurse. About five o'clock, I think you said. That will do. And you may expect to see me, unless something of an unexpected nature occurs to detain me."

The old woman nodded her head and went on with her work, while Amanda, wondering greatly what could be her meaning, returned to the front of the house, and, looking out of a window, beheld the funeral procession, if such it might be called, winding along the avenue at a quick rate.

The rain still fell heavily, and a thin mist was beginning to rise along the lowlands, the wind having fallen since morning. The critical moment was approaching, and Amanda's heart palpitated violently. She was divided between hopes and fears. She did not see how her deeply laid, though simple, plot could fail, but she knew there is such uncertainty in human affairs that in the height of folly to make sure of anything until it is absolutely accomplished.

(To be continued.)

EVELYN'S PLOT.

CHAPTER XLII.

I see she flies me everywhere,
Her eyes her scorn discover;
But what's her scorn, or my despair,
Since 'tis my fate to love her?
Were she but kind whom I adore,
I might live longer, but not love her more.

Anon.

RALPH OSBORNE'S face grew stern and angry as Edith spoke.

"You are rather too peremptory in your terms, young lady. You forget that I could any hour fail in my part of the agreement—that it only needs a word from me to put this young fellow into limbo. Don't you see that?"

She bowed her head.

"Then as no business can be done without a little mutual trust, I would just suggest that it may be better for all parties that you should come down from your high flights and just talk common-sense. I am not a brute nor a rascal. But when I am determined on a thing I am not to be turned, and that has been my principle all through life."

The girl fixed her eyes earnestly on him. The man was right. Yet he spoke more like one arranging for the transfer of land than for the winning of a wife. But it was less harassing for her, and less absurd in him, to take that tone.

"Go on," she said. "Tell me what you want. I can soon decide what I think is safe and right to do."

"That's a sensible girl! Just what I have always thought you. I can trust you, I believe, Edith, when you are my wife, though you are not half my age, and about a hundred times more attractive. Well, then, I'll tell you what I want. Fix the day you will be married. And I'll give you, on the morning of that day, as one of your wedding presents, the complete freedom and safety of your friend. And if I do not, I give you leave to go away unfettered from the church door."

"When?" was all she could articulate.

The very sight and sound of that hard face and harsh voice sickened her heart when she remembered that it would soon be her duty to love, honour, and obey its owner, and to be his companion for life.

"When?" he repeated. "Why, the sooner the better for all parties. What do you say to this day fortnight?"

She mused for a few moments. It was not only the natural shrinking from such a fate that made her pause. She was a noble-minded girl, in spite of her defective education and consequent errors, and she would have unhesitatingly given her life in the next hour to save her lover, or to perform a promise once given. But she felt that there was so much and such perplexing mystery surrounding the whole affair, and also her own history, that each day's reprobation, in this crisis, might serve to elucidate and bring to light what might bear on the very destinies of those for whom she was interested.

And when once united to that hard, cold man, and separated for ever from Cecil, she would have taken the last and crowning point that would decide her fate for life, and, perhaps, that of some others who were apparently unconnected with her.

"When will Mr. Danvers' trial come on?" she asked, suddenly.

"I scarcely know. In about a month, perhaps sooner."

"Will a month be the latest time?"

"Yes, most certainly. I have ascertained that," he said.

"Then, I will be your wife the week after," she said, a cold shiver thrilling through her as she spoke

the words. "The week after his trial I will be your wife."

"Hem! A singular way of fixing it. A sort of 'moveable feast,'" he said, with a spice of the dry humour that at times characterised him. "How on earth are any preparations to be made?"

"None will be needed. I would not have one single sign of the usual marriage ceremony," she said, coldly. "I will go to the altar alone. I want no one to help nor to pity me."

"But—"

"It matters not, it matters not," she said, impatiently. "I have determined on that, at least. All else I leave to you. But in that I am resolved. And ere I speak my vows, you will give me the proofs, the certain proofs, of his innocence and safety."

"Of his entire safety," he replied. "And, it may be, of his innocence, except the usual weaknesses of his age, and keeping bad company, into the bargain. Now, are you satisfied?"

"Yes."

"Then I must stir up the lawyers," he said, smiling grimly. "First, for settlements on my pretty wife; and next, to get this unlucky prisoner's fate arranged, one way or the other. To tell you the plain truth, Edith, I've no faith in your respectable guardian; and what's more, when you are married, it will be precious little that you will see of him. I can tell you for your edification. There, don't look so downcast. I'll be good to you, whatever else I may have been or done. I'm not the man to let a girl who trusts me and does her duty ever be balked of the wildest fancy that ever came over a woman's brain."

And, with a rough but kindly impulse, he took the girl's hand, and, bending down, he kissed her cold cheek.

She shivered at the unwelcome caress. But it was rather that of a father than a lover, and she felt that it was meant as a pledge of his future kindness to her.

Poor child! Kindness and love from some are worse than censure and hate from others. And Edith's very heart sickened as she saw her betrothed husband's look of satisfaction when he left the room. Henceforth her fate was sealed. She was the affianced wife of the rescuer of Cecil Rivers.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Blest tears of soul-feit penitence,
In whose benign, redeeming flow
Is felt the first, the only sense,
Of guiltless joy that guilt can know.
So balmy a virtue that even in the hour
That drop descends, contagion dies,
And health reanimates earth and skies,
And signs of joy proclaim through Heaven
The triumph of a soul forgiven.

ONCE more we are in the presence of the sick and the sorrowful—of the sufferer lying on his couch of pain. Once more is that couch of pain attended by the pale woman, whose care restored Oliver Danvers to health, and smoothed the last days and hours of his father.

But in this case it is no sumptuous apartment, no luxurious couch on which the patient is extended. A simple dimity-hung bed, a modest chamber, furnished with the plainest furniture that could comport with comfort and decency, was the scene on which we now gaze.

A marked difference, indeed, from the damask hangings, the luxurious furniture, the spacious apartment, on whose velvet carpet not a footfall could be heard, where Oliver Danvers' hours of suffering had been passed.

And the patient was unlike the former charge of the nurse Fleming. It was a young man certainly, but in that fact the resemblance ended.

The jetty, glistening hair, the brilliant dark eyes, the handsome features, which, though sharpened by suffering and sickness, still preserved their regularity and charm, were all unlike Oliver's less perfect, but perhaps more manly and expressive, face. And the age was also different. Oliver certainly numbered more than thirty years, but this now patient of that strange woman's could scarcely count more than two-and-twenty summers, and his slight form lacked the full development and vigour of the elder man's.

His suffering, too, was of a different character. The brain was evidently completely untouched, for his eyes were intelligent, and earnest, and bright. But some other injury chained the sufferer to his couch, and emaciated the young features. And the splints on the leg, when the light bed-covering was removed, sufficiently showed the nature of the hurt, or, at least, one of the hurts that prostrated the strong man to his couch.

It was Cecil Rivers who had thus fallen under the care of his cousin's former nurse, and whose attention, even amidst his sufferings, and the various causes of grief and anxiety that weighed on him, was yet attracted by the peculiarity of the appearance and

the demeanour of the nurse, who devoted herself so entirely to him.

"You are better to-day?" she said, in her still, low tones, as she brought him his morning's meal of rich, strong beef tea. "Better, are you not?"

"Yes," he answered, wearily; "only anxious to get away, and be sure of freedom."

She smiled sadly.

"Oh, man! man!" she said, "ever the same—ever the same! Always craving and wanting, rather than thankfully receiving the blessings of his lot."

He moved impatiently.

"What blessings have I?" he asked, fretfully.

"The blessing of certain restoration to health, the blessing of safety from enemies, and, if I am not deceived, the blessing of a clear conscience."

"And of separation from those most dear, and the loss of station, and fame, and fortune, at two-and-twenty. Truly, great blessings to be thankful for!"

"Ah!" she said, sadly, "ah! it is like youth—like youth, to be thus impatient. But when you have suffered and lived as I have, then you will comprehend that these blessings are indeed to be viewed with thankfulness rather than complaining. Boy, you know not yet what suffering is, unless you have been guilty."

He gazed earnestly at the white, calm face.

"I scarcely understand you," he said. "What do you mean by guilt? Tell me. What do you know of my history—of myself?"

"Little," she said, "save that the accident which placed you thus strangely under my care was incurred in a flight—a flight, as I imagine, from danger, if not from worse than danger—I mean the punishment of guilt."

His eyes drooped beneath hers.

"I never yet quite understood where you found me, or how I came here," he said, looking round the apartment, and giving a longing glance at the high window, that baulled his efforts to gaze at what lay beyond.

"That is soon explained," she said. "You were endeavouring to leap over the embankment of the railway, when, I suppose, your foot slipped, and you fell headlong down the precipice. My house, poor as it is, was near the spot. I heard the commotion and the outcry. I am by profession an attendant of the sick and the dying. I offered to take you, instead of letting you go to the hospital, or a place still worse. That is the whole story."

"Not quite all. You have many and many a time, when you thought me sleeping, gazed at me, and murmured words that spoke of a very different feeling and knowledge of me than you would have shown to a stranger. I have scarcely been strong enough to question you yet; but I would fain know what it is that you mean, and what you do know of me?"

"Are you willing to exchange confidences?"

He was silent.

"I thought not," she said, "I thought not. But I shall one day tell all—all that is in my heart, that has crushed me down to the dust, and that has seen me the miserable-looking creature that I am drained the very life blood from my veins. But I must wait till a fitting time, till those whom I am watching and striving to guard from harm are placed in safety. Then I will tell, but not till then, the whole of my sad story."

There was a calm dignity in her manner that impressed the impetuous young man with a degree of awe.

"I would not intrude on your sorrows or your secrecy," he said. "Your kindness to me has been enough to prevent such impertinence. Only, if you do know aught of me, or of my danger, and my prospects, I would entreat you to confess it at once. It would be a relief and comfort to me if I felt that I could confide safely in someone, when it appears that all are against me."

His face was so pleading, and his tone so sad, that it appeared to touch his listener. She rose, walked to the window, and for a moment appeared to struggle with herself. At last she returned to the couch. "Boy," she said, softly, "be content. I know at least enough of your story and your family to be trusted with the rest. I have nursed the sick in your uncle's house; I have listened to your sister's voice; and closed your uncle's eyes. What would you more? You may speak to me as you would to a—mother."

The last word was uttered in a low, choked tone that was scarcely audible.

"A mother!" he said, "a mother! Ah, that was the curse of my boyhood. A mother's sin had cast a shadow over my very name, had deprived me of the counsel, the love, the blessing of a mother's restraining voice. I had no fear of grieving her, I had no fear of bringing a stain on her name by any follies or crimes of mine. And hence the dangers and the misfortunes of my life."

He had spoken so vehemently and bitterly that he had scarcely heeded the effect of his words on

his listener. But ere he had ceased she had hid her face in her hands, and a low, plaintive wail had betrayed her deep emotion.

"What is it?" he said, gently. "What is it? I did not mean to distress you by my words. It was but the outburst of a truth that has so often and so vividly come before me of late."

He would have taken her hand that lay on her lap, while the other concealed the face, but she snatched it impatiently from him.

"No, no, no," she said. "Do not—do not. You will break my heart. Boy, you know not that you are talking to—a wretched mother."

"Pardon me," he said, "pardon me. I did not know. I could not suppose my words would wound you so deeply. I only desired to explain the cause of many a folly and the consequent heavy punishment."

The agitation, whatever it had been, seemed to pass away after a few moments. And when she raised her head her eyes had no trace of tears, save the dark, deep circle round them.

"It is past," she said, "it is past. I am but rightly punished for past sins and neglects. But listen, boy, listen. You are safe—quite safe here, either from your enemies, or from yourself."

"From myself?" he repeated.

"Yes, from yourself. If you were free, you would fly like a moth round the light that would be fatal to you. The fair girl, who has been alike your destruction and your saviour, would soon attract you into the power of your and her worst enemy. And it is only for you to bide your time here, and all may yet be well."

He looked eagerly at her, catching at her words like a drowning man.

"All well?" he said. "Are you serious, or is it an idle consolation?"

"No," she said, "no. I would not hold out false hopes, but I have springs and powers at work that you can little know, and which may, if Heaven's blessing be on them, still bring peace and happiness to all but the guilty. But let me not raise false hopes. It is all yet in the dark, and nothing but time, caution, and patience can resolve the end of the drama. Your cousin, your noble cousin Oliver, is in the most pressing danger now; and it is of him that we must at present chiefly think. For you, only patience is needed to secure your safety."

"And Edith?" he said. "You that seem to know so much, tell me of her?"

"It is of her, not of your sister, that you would think and speak?" she said, reproachfully.

"She is the most helpless, the most in present peril," he said, averting his eyes. "I love my sweet Eva from my very heart, and I know full well that she has risked much for me. But it ever seemed that she looked up to and clung to Oliver more than to me as her adviser and companion. And poor Edith has no one!"

The pale face somewhat brightened.

"Thank Heaven for that!" she said, "thank Heaven at least for that!—that you and your sister love each other," she added, calmly—"that your natural affections and ties are not hardened and severed—that your love for those yet dearer has not destroyed your attachment for each other! I, a mother, can comprehend such things," she added, in answer to the young man's surprised glance.

Then she resumed:

"Are you indeed alarmed as to your—as to Edith?" she said.

"Indeed I am," he replied, sadly. "And she, poor darling, will be in a constant agony of apprehension on my account. She cannot even guess my safety."

The woman again paused.

"What did you—that is—how was your escape effected?" she said. "Nay, it is no secret, boy, that you have been in restraint—to use no harsher word."

He paused a moment.

"Nay, if you will not confide in me, I cannot help you," she said, reproachfully. "If you will tell me how it was accomplished, I have no doubt I can guess how much she knows, and what it will be needful to do."

"It is a short and simple tale," he said. "I was only confined in the part of the prison used for the unconvicted criminals, and indeed, even while I was there, I sometimes fancied that a very remarkable degree of laxness was shown in my custody. However, on the evening in question, a rather singular circumstance—or, rather, combination of circumstances, awakened my attention. The man who attended me gave some such significant hints as to 'the beauty of the fine frosty night,' 'the pleasure of a walk in such weather,' and 'the good sense of never knowing what might come, and never despairing.' &c., though perhaps couched in rather coarser terms than I give them,—that I could scarcely help attaching some importance to them, and in a degree

holding myself in readiness for any sudden emergency, such as he seemed to wish to imply. I ate my supper with unusual rapidity, and perhaps appetite, arranged my dress as conveniently and carefully as I could, and then placed myself on my solitary chair, ready for any crisis. It was not very long in coming.

"The man came back after a time to remove my humble supper-tray, and to lock up and leave me for the night. But he lingered a very remarkable time, on all kinds of excuses, till a sudden and most violent noise and outcry at the other end of the building startled me, and, as it appeared, my gaoler also. He rushed from the cell, closing it behind him, but, as I soon found, did not turn the key. You will suppose I took the hint. I rushed from the cell, along the first passages I saw—guided by a light in the distance—and feeling that I could not be very severely punished for availing myself of an open door.

"The light did not deceive me. It was in an apartment that appeared to belong to one of the turnkeys, for the window was not barred, and the latch even had not been put on. I looked out—saw that the height from the ground was not more than I had many a time leaped when a boy, and now, when liberty was at stake, I should scarcely be likely to hesitate. So I threw open the friendly sash, and with one bound I reached the ground, albeit somewhat stunned by the fall. No one was near. All the gaolers seemed to have been attracted to another side of the building, and the darkness was too thick for me to be observed by any of the passers-by.

"So I sped on as rapidly as I could, without one shilling in my pocket to enable me to take any conveyance, and carefully avoiding the light of the gas-lamps, as if my features alone could have told my tale. It was a thrilling moment. I knew not where I went. I rushed on—only thinking of flight, freedom, and safety! And it was not till I reached the lighted rails of some line—I knew not which—that I began to reflect on my future course. I stood for a moment gazing at the rails, just lighted by the brilliant signal lamps, when an idea struck me that if I could hide myself in the depths of the cuttings on the other side of the line till morning dawned, I might then be able to see where I was, and to arrange some means of flight. I was just rushing across the rails, when the light and the noise of an approaching train startled me. I gave one bound, and then I knew no more till I found myself in this room, and in your care."

"And no better plan than that was organised for you?" said the woman, thoughtfully. "It was a crude and cruel kindness."

"I think it may have been otherwise arranged," he said. "I have some vision of a whisper, and a rustle close to me, when I reached the ground, that may have been those of a friend, ready to aid my escape. But I was too bewildered, and too anxious for freedom, to stop one moment to ascertain the truth."

She was silent for a time.

"Perhaps," she said, "perhaps. At any rate, you are right. It is better that she should have tidings of your safety, though not of your place of shelter. And I will try—I will try. And your sister," she added, after a moment's pause, "your sister. Would you not relieve her anxieties also?"

His face flushed.

"You are right," he said. "And I am selfish, not to have thought of my poor Eva. Can it be accomplished?"

She mused a little.

"Yes," she replied, "yes. But there is much still to be done and considered ere I can conclude and mature my plans. But, at least—at least their minds shall be at rest about you. So much I can promise. And you, in your turn, must engage not to make an attempt of any kind to leave this house, or my care and guidance, till I permit you. Do you understand and promise this? Remember, I have a claim to your obedience."

"I do," he said, "I do promise."

"That is well," she replied. "And now try to sleep. At least you are safe from danger or pursuit, and, for the rest, time alone can show what is in store for you."

And, with a warning, half-commanding gesture, she rose, and, drawing the curtains round the bed, left him to what repose he might obtain.

(To be continued.)

THE Duke of Devonshire is about to construct, at his own sole cost, a line of railway from Fermoy to Lismore. Parliamentary powers for the work were obtained last session, and the preliminaries being nearly concluded, it is expected that the works will be commenced in February next. The estimated cost is £20,000.



ROUND THE WORLD.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE uncivilised islands of the great Pacific each have their own peculiar religious forms and beliefs. The unchristianised natives of all are polytheists, but there, in most cases, all religious likeness ends.

The inhabitants of Tawenga, with the like frightful custom of cannibalism, had also a religion quite similar to that of the Fiji Islanders. They had a god for every trade and industry, and demigods, who were simply the effigies of former monarchs and great men.

On entering the heathen temple, Lily and Roland paused a moment instinctively near the door and looked around them.

They beheld a strange scene.

The floor and wall were covered with thick, closely-plaited mats. Along two sides of the room were ranged small, separate stone altars, each of which was surmounted by a rudely-carved wooden god. One of these was the god of the orange tree. His head was wreathed with orange-leaves, and before him as an offering was a large wicker-work basket filled with great ruddy oranges.

A second deity was the goddess, by some pretty conceit, of flowers. Flowers crowned her misshapen head, wreathed her figure, and overflowed a wicker basket at her feet—great, luxuriant blossoms that sent up a cloud of delicious, spicy fragrance.

A third deity was a god of palms. He was taller than the others, and held a palm-branch in his hand. His altar was larger than the others, and was crowded with jars of palm wine, mats, sails, baskets, fruits, everything that came from the generous palm-tree.

There was a deity for fishermen, and fresh fish, oysters, crabs and other produce of the sea, were deposited before it.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the deities, or describe all the offerings. It is enough to say that the temple looked like a vast bazaar, and the odour of fruits and flowers mingled in one delightful whole.

The principal feature of the chief room of the temple was, however, a great, carved god—the chief deity—twenty feet high, and equal in all its proportions. It occupied nearly the whole end of the room opposite the entrance. A row of scented oil lamps burned before it. Its face had a solemn beauty, and glittered and shone with a moon-like splendour and with iridescent rays, the wood being entirely concealed by a layer of choice mother-of-pearl.

Lily looked at this image in wonder and awe, his

great shining eyes, like blood-red rubies, seeming to follow her movements.

All this the fugitives had seen in a single minute. "We must hide quickly," said Roland, as the flying storm brought the yells of the savages again to their ears. "There is a door to some inner room, on each side of the god. I will see if there is anyone within it."

He moved quickly towards the inner room, Lily following, and holding up her garments so that the drip of water should not betray them.

"Just before gaining the door the lad paused, having detected a third door just behind the god.

He had also made a more important discovery, namely, a little door in the back of the god itself.

He moved towards it with the rapidity of lightning.

It was slightly ajar, and he peered in.

A dark, cavernous chamber, floored with mats, was all that met his gaze.

A sudden inspiration came to him.

He seized Lily by the arm, and without a word, drew her into the cavity, and after glancing at the spring of the door, drew the latter shut.

"I think we are safe here," he whispered. "If they look in, we can hide back in the darkness."

He led her forward into one of the colossal feet of the image, and they crouched together on the floor.

What a strange situation!

They heard the temple rock in the fierce hurricane, and heard again the yell of the savages, now frighteningly near.

"I don't believe they will find us here," said the lad, thoughtfully. "I think that this hollow in the god is a secret invention of the priests. They may use it to hide persons in. There is a faint light up to the breast, darling. I think there is a thin wire-covered place in the breast. I might look through it, and watch for our enemies, or the entrance of the priests."

"Go, Roland," said Lily, cheerfully. "I feel safe here. Only be careful. You might fall, or be seen."

He promised to obey her injunctions, kissed her, and crept out into the great central cavity.

As he expected, he found niches in the interior of the god, by which to climb to the breast. He availed himself of these niches, and climbed, with sailor-like agility, to the top, coming out on a small platform.

His suspicions were verified, the wood in the very centre of the breast being cut away, and the vacancy supplied by an admirably executed network of zinc, so prepared as to strongly resemble iron.

This deceit was not perceptible from the exterior of the image, partly because the breast was so high

above the worshippers, and partly because the network was close, and coloured like the wood.

From this standpoint on the platform Roland could look through the network into the lighted temple.

"This must be a contrivance of the priests," he thought, as he settled himself on the platform. "These savages are so deceitful that even their religion is full of artful contrivances and deceptions. What can the priest do in here?"

He had scarcely asked himself the question when his hand touched it lightly, and the mouth of the image opened slightly, but perceptibly.

Roland hastened to close it again.

He comprehended then that, on grand occasions, the great deity of Tawenga was made to issue its commands; that, in brief, some priest was wont, for his own purposes, to speak through the mouth of the image to the credulous and superstitious worshippers. He had no time to ponder on his singular discovery, for a terrific blast shook the temple, and at the same moment a wild human roar sounded almost in his ears. And then the temple door was opened, and Queen Taliti, Waloa, and several others rushed into the edifice.

The door remained open, and a throng of curious faces peered in, the savages not daring to cross the threshold until permission had been received from the chief priest.

The new comers immediately began a search behind every altar, uttering cries of anger and vengeance.

They had scarcely commenced their search, when one of the inner doors opened, and two or three of the heathen priests made their appearance.

One of these was evidently the high priest, for he wore a small, thin crown, inferior to the queen's, yet betokening him of high rank.

He made an obeisance to his royal visitor, and, with arms folded across his breast, remained standing to hear her pleasure at that strange hour.

Taliti made known, in her native tongue, the escape of her prisoners, and demanded if they had taken refuge in the temple.

The priest replied in the negative. The queen then appeared to insist on a thorough search of the temple, and the chief priest acceded to her wish, himself conducting the search.

He led them to every nook and cranny in the outer temple, cunningly avoiding, however, the hollow god—an avoidance which confirmed Roland's suspicions that the secret belonged to the priests alone. He then conducted her to the inner rooms, and Roland blessed the Providence that had revealed to him his present hiding-place.

Had he gone into the inner rooms, he must have plunged into the presence of the priests, or, if he had escaped that peril, it would have been only to be discovered by his pursuers.

He longed to speak to little, patient Lily, but he dared not.

He waited on the platform, motionless and almost breathless, until their pursuers returned from the interior of the temple.

They came soon, panting, and enraged at their non-success, looked once more through the outer temple, and then swept out again into the storm and darkness to continue their search, entirely satisfied that the fugitives had not entered the temple.

"They might have seen our wet tracks, if they had not been so quick to make fresh ones of their own," thought Roland, looking down at the wet matting. "But I think we made no tracks near this image. Our feet had become dry before we reached it."

He was about to descend and impart the good news of their present deliverance to Lily, when he became conscious that the savage priests were making an investigation on their own account.

He crouched breathlessly on the platform, stretching himself flat upon it, and no longer daring to look out of the deity.

He felt that a crisis was at hand.

It came speedily. All the priests, save the chief, retired to the inner room. The chief priest locked the door upon them, picked up one of the lamps, approached the image, opened the door on its back and looked into the cavity, flashing his light around.

How Roland's heart beat then!

He feared that Lily might be discovered, or that she might, in fear of discovery, cry out for mercy.

He cautiously peered down at his enemy.

It was a cruel, cunning, and thoroughly repulsive face that met his stealthy glance—the face of one who dealt in artifices and deceit for the furtherance of his own ends. He was a fat, greasy pompous personage, and Roland shuddered with affright at the sight of him.

He softly drew back his head, dreading every instant to hear some cry of terror from Lily, or shout of triumph from the priest.

What if the water from their garments had left wet marks on the floor!

Where Lily was crouched, in the foot of the image, he knew there must be a pool of water from her saturated clothes.

He waited in an agony for the blow to fall, and his soul sent up a wild and wretched prayer that Lily, at least, might be saved from her enemies.

The prayer was answered.

The priest flashed his light for the last time, its glare blinding his eyes to the drops of water on the floor. Then, satisfied that his most secret place had not been invaded, he softly withdrew, and closed the door.

A moment later he passed into the inner room.

In this revulsion of feeling, Roland almost fainted. He fell back, half unconscious, on the platform, a wild emotion of gratitude convulsing his soul!

His next emotion was a feeling of tender respect for and profound thankfulness to Lily, whose self-control had saved them both from a horrible fate.

He murmured her name with fond blessings.

And then, with trembling limbs, he crept down the niches to the floor, and sought Lily in her concealment. She had not fainted, as he had half expected. She had crept out to the very extremity of the image's foot, and looked thence at her foster-brother with eyes that shone through the gloom like steady lamps, so serene and bright was their unvarying glow.

"Lily," he whispered, creeping to her side and gathering her in his arms. "Lily, we are safe!"

"Yes, Roland," she answered, quietly. "After showing us this nice hiding-place, God would not abandon us. I knew that old savage would not find us!"

Her gentle faith rebuked Roland for his terror and misgivings.

He clasped her closely, helping her to wring the wet from her clothing, and for some time they sat in a happy silence. They listened to the storm as it raged, though beginning at last to subside; and they heard the shouts of passing savages, and knew that the search was still in active progress.

But they felt safe in the interior of the heathen god, trusting in a God high above the feeble conceptions of mortals, a God who has neither beginning nor end, and whose dwelling is a house not made with hands, "eternal in the heavens."

As the night wore on the temple grew strangely still. The priests had evidently retired to their couches. The gusts of wind came more seldom, and no longer shook the building.

"Are you awake, Roland?" she whispered.

"Yes, darling," he answered, quickly.

"I'm so hungry, Roland," she said, pleadingly.

"I've eaten nothing to-day, since the queen came to me this morning and said she should fatten and eat me. She said you should be made to eat me too, and that I should be killed to-morrow. I tried to make myself thin, Roland, and I wouldn't eat, and I'm cold too. My clothes are drying fast in this warm air."

"You should have food, dear Lily," replied Roland, tenderly. "How you have suffered, darling! I will find what we want in the temple, by taking it from those senseless wooden gods."

"Be careful, Roland," said Lily. "Take out only a little, so they won't miss it. Don't stay long."

She loosened her clasp on him, and he crept softly to the door, found the spring, and opened the little portal, then crept out into the temple.

It was entirely deserted by every one save the fugitives.

Roland sought the shrine of the god of oranges, and took all he could without danger of discovery. Limes, plantains, baked yams, lemons, bananas, and bread-fruit were transferred to his possession. A calabash, found among a pile of similar utensils, he filled with palm oil, and another he filled with clear spring water, procured from a natural fountain near the outer door. His last act was to transfer to his already crowded pockets some large, fresh oysters in the shell, and with these stores, as a result of his predations, he returned to his hiding-place.

"Here, Lily," he said, emptying his arms and unloading his pockets. "I have stores enough to last till to-morrow night. I have brought you a drink of wine to warm you up. You must not take cold after your exposure."

He placed the calabash to Lily's lips, and she drank freely, washing down the unpleasant draught with water.

"How long must we stay here, do you think, Roland?" she asked, when the lad had treated himself to a similar dose, and she had begun to satisfy her hunger.

"I can't tell, perhaps a week, perhaps longer. For a week the search may be kept up all over the island. They will believe that we are in the jungle. After a while, as they get no trace of us, they will think we are dead. We shall then be free to creep out, steal a boat, and put off to sea."

"I hope the stormy season will be past soon! I'm afraid of hurricanes at sea."

"We will wait till Providence points to flight again," said Roland. "We are hidden in a place known only to the chief priest. He is satisfied we are not here. There is a place in the breast where we can look out and see the light of day. It lets in air too, else we should suffocate. There is plenty of food and drink within our search. As you so often remind me, darling Lily, 'let us leave the rest to Heaven!' Now try to sleep, Lily, for you are very tired."

They lay down in each other's arms, Lily pillowing her head on Roland's breast, and both were soon asleep.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LILY and Roland slept long and soundly, and were awakened late next morning by a rude chanting in the temple. It was dark within the idol, but neither headed the gloom in the sense of security they experienced. They sat up and conversed in whispers while the natives worshipped their several deities, each worshipping the one he deemed most likely to benefit him during the day.

"Won't the priests come in here?" asked Lily, apprehensively.

"I believe not," answered Roland. "As near as I can make out, they come into this idol for the purpose only of speaking through it, or peering out unseen at their congregations. The savages are all alike, and even their religion is savage. The priests differ from the rest only in being more cunning, more keen, more quick-witted."

"Oh, Roland!" exclaimed Lily, shocked. "They are priests—"

"Of a heathen and false religion," interrupted Roland. "My darling Lily, is it possible you expect of these heathen jugglers the purity, honesty, and goodness that belong to the ministers of our holy faith?"

"Of course not," said Lily. "You must not think me foolish, Roland. Do you suppose they speak through the idol very often?"

"No," said Roland, shrewdly. "The idol would not be held in high respect if he spoke often. But we will be on our guard, darling. This foot shall be our hiding-place. Shall we have breakfast now?"

Lily assented, and Roland brought out his stores, including the unopened oysters. They were a difficult problem at first, but Roland's trusty jack knife being brought into requisition, the tempting flesh of the bivalves was revealed to the touch, if not to the sight.

"Eat as much as you can, dear Lily," said the lad. "The fruit is all sound and perfect, so it won't

matter if you can't see it. The offerings to the idols were all perfect, each in its own way. Eat and drink, darling, without fear."

He set the example, and Lily followed it, without hesitation. In their safe refuge they enjoyed the repast more than better ones in prosperous days.

"We need only a light to be perfectly comfortable," declared Lily. "My clothes are dry, and I feel perfectly well. I was never so strong at home as I have been since living on the sea. Papa and mamma used to be alarmed about my health. Now I feel as if all my nerves were steel."

"You were always delicate, Lily, and perhaps this adventurous life may make you strong and healthy."

The meal was despatched, and the remnants put away for two more repasts. Then they listened to the chanting without, an address in the native dialect from one of the priests, and the abrupt withdrawal of the congregation.

They feared that the chief priest would return to the idol at the first opportunity, but the day passed, and he came not. Once or twice during the day Roland climbed up to the platform, and peered out through the breast of the idol. At night, he repeated this experiment, and learned that darkness had fallen without—that the lamps were burning steadily, and that fresh offerings had been made to the various deities.

At the earliest moment he deemed it safe, he stole out into the temple and loaded himself with fruits, oysters, and water, returning unseen to Lily.

"I wish I had dared to fetch a lamp, dear Lily," he said, closing the door behind him, "but there's an even row, and one might be missed. Here are baked yams and baked bread-fruit."

"Baked!" exclaimed Lily. "Why do they cook them for those wooden idols, I wonder?"

"I suspect the priests eat them at the close of the day," replied Roland, "and the people think the gods took them. They are best cooked, I suppose."

He stowed away the articles, and Lily said, laughingly:

"How odd it all seems, Roland! Two Devonshire children hiding in an idol's foot on a Pacific island! Isn't it strange? When we lived in dear old England, how little we dreamed of an adventure like this."

"It is strange to us," answered Roland, "but hundreds of sailors have had equally singular experiences. No one can knock about the world long without meeting with odd adventures."

"You talk like a man, Roland," said Lily, with innocent admiration for the increased wisdom of her foster-brother. "What will papa and mamma think of you when we get home? Papa must see that there's no use in talking of college any more."

Roland smiled involuntarily, but the darkness hid his hilarity from his little companion.

"There's no storm to-night," said Lily, after a pause. "I wonder if the hurricane last night injured the Annie Colton. I hope not. I should feel grieved if Captain Wexley, or Mr. Randall, or Mr. Bickley, were as badly off as we are."

"Probably the ship scuttled before the gale. Captain Wexley is a good sailor, and the ship was not likely to be lost. I suppose the queen and prince have put their disappointed heads together," added Roland, "and they are doubtless searching every square inch of the island. We shall sleep none the less soundly for their restlessness."

Lily agreed to this proposition, and soon after they proved its truth by falling sound asleep.

The next day was much like the first, and so was the next and the next. A week passed away, and still the young fugitives were in hiding, and still the place of their concealment had not yet been discovered.

At the end of the week an event occurred that made the young adventurers think again of flight.

The weather had cleared into the loveliest, sunniest weather conceivable, as Roland had ascertained from his outlook. The night was soft and brilliant with starlight. The air was filled with spicy odours. The fruits and flowers brought to the temple had more than ever delicious flavours and intoxicating fragrance. It was plain that nature was making up by unusual goodness for her late sullen and stormy behaviour.

It was an excellent time for a sea voyage, and Roland began to ponder plans of escape.

The search for him and Lily seemed to be over. He was thinking of this one evening, and about to open his thoughts to Lily, when the two heard voices without in the temple—voices they firmly believed to belong to Queen Taliti and her adviser and kinsman Walton.

They crept nearer the extremity of their hiding place, Roland whispering:

"I should like to climb up on the platform, Lily, and see what is going on outside."

Lily put her hand over his mouth and held him close, without replying.

A moment later her caution proved itself necessary.

The door in the wall behind the idol opened very softly, and the door into the idol was swung open. Then the chief priest entered, closed the aperture, and began to ascend to the platform.

Roland shuddered at his narrow escape.

The two peered out of the shadows enveloping them, and watched the intruder.

He gained the platform and peered out through the network of the breast.

The next moment the fugitives heard the voice of the queen, loud and shrill, as she addressed the supposed god.

To their astonishment she addressed him in her broken English instead of her native tongue.

Her words explained the reason.

"Oh, god of Tawenga, who know more than poor miserable gods of Valo, and Wanto, and Nalane, speak to Taliti, the queen, the words she wants to hear," she exclaimed, her voice ringing through the temple like a shout. "Speak English language. Taliti wants to talk of English. Speak English language, for Melican man once said English language, language of gods!"

The high priest pulled a hidden cord, and the idol's jaw dropped—a sign of gracious assent.

"The priest must have learned English from those English sailors who were wrecked here," whispered Roland, excitedly.

Such had been indeed the fact.

The queen, in her admiration for her English favourite, had not only learned his language, but made it imperative to the prince and priests to do so also. The Englishman had been in high favour, and even the dignitaries of Tawenga had sought his influence with the queen—to learn his language had been a part of their policy.

Taliti, delighted at the graciousness of her deity, resumed her loud pleadings.

"God of Tawenga," she cried, "where are the English? Where is he whom Taliti loves? Where is she whom Taliti hates?"

"Drowned," said the priest through the idol's mouth, in harsh and guttural tones.

The queen shrieked and beat her breast with her hands.

"Drowned!" she cried, uttering words in her native language expressive of grief and anger. "Drowned that night! Woe! woe!"

For a few moments the temple rang with her angry cries, and the fugitives clasped each other in fear.

Suddenly the queen resumed, her tones singularly calm after her storm of emotion:

"God of Tawenga, English ship outside of island. May come shore for water and fruits. Taliti want vengeance. Will have success if Taliti attack ship? Hundred good men of Tawenga, good weapons, good courage. Taliti must have vengeance. Taliti hates English!"

She waited long and breathlessly for a response, believing the god to be looking into the future for her.

To the contrary of her ideas, the chief priest was puzzling his brains how to reply in English. His stock of words in that language was very small. He scratched his savage head, and once he pulled at the cord to shut the idol's mouth.

Inpiration, however, came to him.

In a deep hoarse voice, he rolled out the word:

"Success!"

The queen took no notice of the vagueness of her oracle, did not even think that success was not promised to her more than to the other party.

She uttered joyful shouts, screaming her satisfaction in her own language.

"God of Tawenga," she cried, after she had again become calm, "Taliti make attack before morning, before light comes."

The oracle was pleased to smile upon this proposition, and the queen then vowed costly gifts to her.

The priest drew the secret cord, and then, well satisfied with his display of English, descended to the floor and withdrew as he had come.

"Did you hear, Lily?" asked Roland, after a short silence. "An English ship is lying outside the stoll, with the intention of sending ashore in the morning for water and fruits. The savages intend to attack her before daybreak."

"We must save her," said Lily, all excitement and energy. "How can we reach her, Roland? How can we warn her?"

"We must not only warn her, but escape in her!" declared Roland. "Oh, Lily, we shall need all our strength and caution to-night. As soon as the priests sleep we must fly."

Both were too excited to sit still. They prayed

for help and guidance, and then walked about waiting for the night to deepen.

How the hours dragged!

They waited, watched, and listened, and at last were confident that the priests slept. From his outlook, Roland saw that all was still without the temple. The islanders were apparently asleep, gaining strength for the murderous assault.

He descended to Lily's side.

The hour for leaving their refuge had come.

(To be continued.)

THE DOUBLE FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The brigand became silent and thoughtful, as if forgetting his proposed communication, and Sir Frederick began to fear that his curiosity was doomed to remain unsatisfied, but at length Gueveno remarked:

"Before revealing to you the great mystery of my life, it may be well to explain to you who and what I really am. The secret will remain safe with you, I am sure, for reasons which you will soon discover. I am by birth an Englishman. My father was English, my mother Italian. My name is Somerville."

"I have heard that name before," interrupted Sir Frederick, involuntarily.

"You have. My mother possessed a haughty, unbending spirit, and my father was much like her. Their married life, which began with love, ended with bitter recriminations and abuse. Finally, in a fit of jealousy or rage, my father is said to have caused my mother's death, and fled from England. I was claimed by my Italian relatives, who taught me to hate the very name of Englishman. That is my story. You heard the name of Somerville when the occurrence was one of the topics of the day. My father died somewhere abroad, and I came into the inheritance of the family mansion, a queer, sombre old place, which now goes by the name of 'The Haunted House.'

"I grew up wild and reckless," continued Somerville, reflectively, "and finally, pressed for money and not liking work, I joined this band as a lieutenant. The captain was killed in a conflict, and I was promoted to his place. It is I who have made the name of Gueveno a terror—I who have been the scourge of travellers in these parts for the past three years!"

He seemed to feel a sort of gloomy pride in thus confessing himself an outlaw.

"I like ease and gaiety," he resumed, and sometimes tire of this cavern and the everyday eating and drinking, varied with the exercise of my pursuit; and when I feel thus restless I go somewhere and spend a few weeks in enjoyment. Arvelo is very well content at being left in command, and the men think all I do is right. They are only too glad to have me with them part of the time. Thus I pass a delightful existence. I visit Paris, England, Naples, any place I for the moment prefer, and never once has my identity been suspected. In England I generally call myself Mr. Somerville, in Paris and elsewhere I go by the title of Lord Somerville, which I prefer, although I have no right to it. But it's not every Englishman who studies the peerage, and foreigners of course are easily imposed upon in that respect."

He paused a moment, while a shade of emotion passed over his face, and then continued:

"It was in one of my visits that I met Edith Welsley. Our first meeting was rather romantic. She was driving, with the lady who acted as her chaperone, in the Bois de Boulogne, when the horses took fright and their driver lost all control over them. Her friend screamed with terror, but she sat pale and motionless. I stopped the horses—it was not a difficult thing to do—and the two ladies were so kind as to think that I had saved their lives. From that time, Edith and I met often. I was known to her as Lord Somerville. I grew to love her with all my soul—she was so different from me. I delighted in her golden hair and soft blue eyes, so completely opposite to my own dark looks; and she loved me—I know she did! I delighted in her delicacy of appearance, as opposed to my own rude strength. In short, Sir Frederick, I almost worshipped her!"

His voice trembled and his face was convulsed with emotion. Apparently ashamed of this weakness, he struggled to recover his calmness, and soon succeeded.

"I said Edith loved me," he said. "I was right but her ambition was stronger than her love, as I now know. I told her a very plausible story about not being free to marry before I had attained the age of twenty-eight—I was then twenty-seven—and, astute as she was, I deceived Edith thoroughly in that respect. But I assured her that I could contract a secret marriage, which should ultimately be acknowledged. She believed me a lord, and im-

mensely wealthy. She consented to a secret bridal."

Sir Frederick uttered an exclamation.

"Yes," continued the brigand, thoughtfully, "she consented. Anything can be done with money, Sir Frederick, and we were married in a secluded church, with but two witnesses besides the priest, and our marriage was perfectly valid. We were neither of us Catholics, you know, and were, of course married in a Protestant church. One of the witnesses has since died, and the other, Edith's maid—still lives, I believe!"

"Edith married—and to you!" exclaimed the baronet.

"Yes—she is my lawful wife! Her real name is Edith Somerville."

"I can scarcely comprehend it. Why did you not live together?"

"I kept Edith quiet more than a year, but she finally demanded to be acknowledged as my wife. Of course, during that year I was not all the time in Paris. I had to be with my band. Edith grew jealous of these absences, for which I had continually to make excuses to her, and she declared she would follow me the next time I left Paris and see where I went. In the altercation which followed I foolishly confessed that I was Gueveno, the dreaded brigand! That did not alienate her. But the discovery that I was no lord at all, but an impostor, overwhelmed her, as I had feared it would. She forbade me her presence. I begged and implored her to relent, but she would not. Hoping that time would soften her feelings to me—for I was legally her husband—I returned to my band. When next I went to Paris, a few months later, she had gone, and her former chaperone either could not or would not tell me where. All I could learn was that, two months before my arrival, she had announced her departure, discharged her maid—probably not wishing that witness of our marriage near her—and had departed. I searched vainly for her, but could not find her. Until to-day I have had no clue to her whereabouts."

"But how did you know me?" inquired the baronet.

"Oh, Edith used often to boast of her wealthy relative, Sir Frederick Hamlin, but it never occurred to me that she might have gone to your dwelling."

"And how did you learn about Arthur's being in Germany?" Edith couldn't have known that!"

"After I had learned so much about you, I very naturally inquired about your family of English tourists whom I frequently met in Paris. In that way I picked up a little information."

"So Edith is actually your wife?"

"Actually and truly my wife! And I love her now more than ever. I would give all I have in the world to reclaim her. If she would only forgive me I should be supremely happy."

"Would you give up your present occupation, and endeavour to become a respectable member of society?" asked Sir Frederick, thoughtfully.

"I would! I would do anything to regain her. I know her faults—she has many—but I love her, and can excuse them all! Do you believe she would forgive me, Sir Frederick, and reinstate me in her affections?"

"I do not know. She has been to blame, but you have cruelly and basely wronged her in working upon her ambition to induce her to become your wife. Whether she would forgive you or not, I cannot say, but you might apply to her and express your repentance!"

"Would you be my ambassador to her?" asked the brigand, with feverish eagerness. "Will you bear to her a message from me?"

The baronet assented.

"And will you use your influence in my behalf?"

"No, I cannot promise that. I am very sorry that Edith should ever have been betrayed into a marriage with you; but having been, perhaps the best had better be made of the affair. If you would reform, you might have some chance with her."

"But, if you were my ambassador to her, you would say nothing against me—nothing to prevent her forgiving me."

The baronet hesitated.

He regarded the brigand narrowly and searching.

Perhaps he saw in the anxious face before him the gleam of a better nature; perhaps he thought that that erring soul might yet be redeemed, for he answered:

"No, I will do nothing to dissuade her from forgiving you. I will state your words fairly to her, and leave her to act upon her own judgment."

"Then you shall go to her immediately!" cried Somerville, eagerly, starting to his feet. "You shall depart within the hour. From this moment, Sir Frederick, you are free!"

"But your men? Will they not object?"

"I am master here!" returned the brigand chief, proudly. "They would not dare gainsay my word. Your money, of course, was taken from you when you came. How much had you?"

Sir Frederick named the amount.

The brigand drew his purse from his pocket and handed it to the baronet.

"That will more than cover your loss," he said.

"Have you anything else to say to me?"

"I wish to inquire about the two French surgeons, who restored me to reason. Will you not set them free too?"

The chief remained silent for several minutes, and finally replied:

"They shall be freed too. They shall accompany you. One of the men shall guide you to Salerno, and you will hasten then to your home!"

"I will. But how shall I communicate with you?"

"I will follow you to England. Perhaps I will start within a week. If Edith remains scornful I will return. If she is placable I will go where she wills. You will tell her, Sir Frederick," he added, anxiously, "that I freed you as soon as I learned your name? You will also mention that I liberated the French gentlemen at your desire? I want to appear as well as possible in her eyes, after all that has passed between us."

Sir Frederick promised.

"I cannot let you go, eager as I am to see you depart," continued the brigand, "without at least the show of hospitality. I will have dinner set for you——"

"Pray do not! I could not eat a morsel," exclaimed Sir Frederick, the prospect of going home having greatly excited him. "The sooner I depart the better!"

This eagerness accorded with the brigand's mood.

"Your clothes are very shabby, Sir Frederick," he said, "but you can get new ones on your way. I will go out and speak to my men, as I wish to explain your departure to them!"

He left the chamber, proceeding to the main cavern.

He found the Frenchmen the centre of a crowd of bandits, who were eagerly questioning them as to the mode in which they had performed their miraculous cure upon the baronet. The explanations of the surgeons were considered as very unsatisfactory, and one or two of the men expressed an opinion that they were in league with the Father of Evil, or else that they were saints.

"We'll try their saintliness," growled Arvelo. "One of our fellows is getting worse, and I foresee that these prisoners are bound to lose their heads, or pay a big ransom!"

A loud laugh greeted this remark.

"Peace, my men!" said their chief, as he appeared among them. "The Frenchmen have done well with the wounded, as you told me yourselves. I am going to send them away within the hour."

A low murmur was the only response the brigand received from the men.

"A couple of simple surgeons cannot pay a ransom," continued Gueveno, unheeding the slight demonstration of his band. "They and the Ingles are free!"

Not a man, except Arvelo, ventured to look displeased at this statement.

"Lieutenant," said the chief, "I think of making another journey soon. You will, of course, be left in command. It, therefore, ill becomes you to set an example of insubordination."

Arvelo's face was instantly wreathed with smiles at the thought of soon again being the nominal captain of the band.

The chief then turned to the Frenchmen, who found themselves unable to comprehend the scene, and said:

"Gentlemen, you are free. A guide will conduct you and the Englishman to Salerno."

The surgeons expressed their gratitude at the brigand's unexpected act of justice. Sir Frederick was then summoned from the inner cavern, and the little party prepared to take its departure.

"Where is Pepita, to whom I owe my life?" asked the baronet, vainly looking around the chamber for her. "I would bid her farewell!"

At the sound of his voice Pepita appeared from his late cell.

She had heard the captain say that the Englishman was going, and she felt a little natural regret at losing her late charge, but this regret was speedily lost in her joy at his recovered freedom.

"Heaven bless you, Pepita!" said the baronet, pressing her hand to his lips. "May you be rewarded as liberally as you have dealt kindly with me! If you ever need a friend, apply to me!"

A tear dimmed Pepita's bright eyes as she inquired the baronet's name and residence, and she then bade him farewell.

The captain exchanged a few last words with his ambassador, and the little party, with its guide, left the brigand's cavern.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WHAT exultant emotions thrilled the heart of Sir Frederick as he found himself beneath the sunshine of heaven and with the fresh air fanning his brows!

Although his year of captivity was as if it had not been, the very air he breathed seemed strange to him, and the breeze that sighed among the trees had an unfamiliar sound.

He almost doubted as he caught sight of his ragged clothing and the long grey beard that lay upon his breast whether it was indeed himself who was walking amid those strange scenes—or whether he was not dreaming.

He rubbed his eyes with his hands to assure himself that he was really awake, and then started as he for the first time noticed the long claw-like nails that disfigured his fingers.

How strange that a year had dropped from his life like a bead from a string!

How equally strange had been his return to consciousness!

In his great gladness, he clasped the surgeon who had restored him in a strong embrace and sobbed like a child.

When he had recovered his calmness, and had become somewhat used to his personal appearance, he reflected upon the revelation that had been made him by Somerville.

"Everything seems strange!" he murmured. "I can hardly believe that that brigand told me the truth. Yet it must have been so. If things would only seem more real!"

They walked to the place where the horses were kept, mounted, and took their way to Salerno.

The day was beautiful—one of those lovely Italian days that linger in the memory, but to the baronet all looked dreamy and unreal.

He almost expected to awaken soon in his library at the Lindens.

But as the party journeyed onwards he lost this dreamy sensation, and began to look at things in their true light.

Arrived near Salerno, they dismounted, and their guide left them, taking the horses back with him.

They walked the remainder of the distance, and on reaching the town the French surgeon went to rejoin their friends, while the baronet proceeded to a quiet hotel, but not before he had again expressed his gratitude for the great service they had rendered him. They declared that they were equally indebted to him, since they owed him their freedom, and they separated from him with much regret.

The first act of Sir Frederick was to submit himself to the hands of a barber—the second, to call in the services of a tailor.

With his beard removed and his whiskers trimmed, and with a decent suit of clothes, he began to feel more like himself.

He had already begun to lose sight of his late experiences, and to look forward to his return home.

He pictured Amy's delight—Arthur's joy—at holding him, and almost wept in anticipation of the joyful scene.

With an impatience and eagerness to clasp them in his arms, he left Salerno that very night, and proceeded to Paris with as little delay as possible. He did not stop in Paris over-night, but sped on to Boulogne, and hastened to London with the utmost rapidity.

Not a doubt entered his mind but that the family was at the Lindens, and he proceeded thither without an hour's delay in the metropolis.

Arrived at Hovey, he crossed over to Mr. Marks's, Crown Inn, and demanded a vehicle, with the swiftest horses at command.

He waited in the shady little parlour of the inn while the vehicle was being got ready.

Mr. Marks hastened to the parlour to offer his guest some refreshment, but almost fainted on recognising him.

"Sir Frederick Hamlin!" he cried, sitting down. "It is a ghost! Murder! Eavens!"

"It is no ghost, my good Mr. Marks," exclaimed the baronet. "It is myself—Sir Frederick Hamlin, in person! Did you think me dead?"

"Eavens! What a question! We've buried you! You're in the family vault! Oh, I know this is a warning to me that I'm not long for this world—!"

"Buried me?" repeated the baronet. "What do you mean? Be sensible, Mr. Marks. Explain your strange behaviour!"

Gradually recovering his calmness, the innkeeper became convinced that Sir Frederick was still alive, and he responded:

"Then we've buried the wrong man! But I could have sworn he was you, Sir Frederick! Grey fetched home a body as he said was yours, and we buried it, and if 'twasn't you I'd like to know who it was!"

A few minutes' thought furnished the baronet with the solution to the enigma proponnd.

"It was my brother's body, Mr. Marks. He fell dead beside me, and Grey must have thought it was me. But I should have thought he would have known my clothing."

Mr. Hamlin explained that the body in question had been robbed of its clothing.

"Then it was Colonel Hamlin as we mourned

over, Sir Frederick. There was no mistake about his being a Hamlin!"

It afforded a melancholy satisfaction to the baronet to know that his brother's remains had met with proper burial, but the thought then occurred to him that he was about to present himself to his beloved ones like one from the dead.

"How is the family at the Lindens?" he asked, his voice choking with emotion, and his heart throb-
bing with excitement.

Mr. Marks was silent, and his usually ruddy face lost the colour it had just re-acquired.

Sir Frederick was instantly alarmed.

"Are they ill?" he faltered. "Is Amy—Arthur—dead?"

"Oh, no, Sir Frederick—leastways I hope not," replied the innkeeper, finding his voice. "But they have left the Lindens."

"Left the Lindens?"

"Yes, Sir Frederick, and gone up to Lunnon for the season. They are havin' gay times, with balls and parties, and such like!"

The baronet felt a pang of disappointment.

Had he been so soon forgotten?

"So they are at our town-house?" he asked.

"You think they are all well?"

"Well, yes, Sir Frederick," responded Mr. Marks, hesitatingly. "They ought to be. Bessie, Miss Amy's maid that was—but who is now married to a likely young fellow—she had a letter from Miss Welsley's maid the other day, saying that her mistress told her that the wedding would soon come off."

"The wedding!" interrupted the baronet, his face losing its extreme pallor. "Then my great and life-long wish is about to be realized! This is joyful news to meet me on my arrival! The dear children will have one guest at their wedding who will not be less welcome for being unexpected!"

Mr. Marks applied his jacket-sleeve to his eyes, as he said:

"Is this the first you've heard of the news, Sir Frederick?"

"The very first. I thought the family were at the Hall, and came straight through. I shall go back to-night by the next train."

"You look like a ghost, Sir Frederick. No wonder I thought you was one! Won't you have a bed here over-night?"

The baronet replied in the negative.

"Then I'll just order a dinner for your honour," said the innkeeper, "and while it's getting ready I'll tell you all the news."

He withdrew, countermanded the order for the vehicle which Sir Frederick had ordered, gave directions for a dinner suitable for his distinguished guest, and then returned to the parlour with a calmer demeanour.

"When did you say this wedding was to be, Mr. Marks?" asked the baronet.

"I don't know the day, Sir Frederick, but soon, of course. I've been hopin', sir, that something'd happen so that they wouldn't get married at all!" said the innkeeper, desperately.

"But why not, sir?" questioned Sir Frederick, sternly.

"Because, to my humble thinking, she ain't worthy of Sir Arthur—I mean Mr. Arthur—be-parding, Sir Frederick!"

"Not good enough for my son! Miss Amy not good enough for my son!" repeated the baronet, his sternness deepening. "Be careful what you say!"

"I ain't speaking of Miss Amy, Sir Frederick," whimpered Mr. Marks. "She ain't to be the bride! It's to be Miss Edith."

Sir Frederick looked stupefied.

"Miss Edith to be the bride!" he said, in a hollow whisper.

"Yes, Sir Frederick. So she told her maid!"

The room seemed to reel round the baronet. Could it be, he asked himself, that Edith would commit a crime to obtain the rank for which she had always been so ambitious? Would she commit bigamy?

Then he thought of Amy, how carefully he had educated her to love his son, and of how terribly she must be stricken by this blow.

How his heart yearned over her at that terrible moment!

"I have returned to comfort her," he thought.

"She shall find balm in her father's affection."

The tears sprang to his eyes and relieved the weight upon his brain.

"Is—is Miss Amy well?" he asked, hesitating how to put the question in the most delicate manner, and learn if his darling were suffering.

"I—I don't know, Sir Frederick," faltered the innkeeper. "I will tell you the truth, your honour, before you can hear it from others," he added, with resolution. "Miss Edith drove Miss Amy away from the Hall more than a year ago."

"Drove her away?"

"Yes, Sir Frederick. She sent her off one night without any of her luggage, which it is at the Hall

this minute, and Miss Amy has never been seen since."

The baronet uttered a groan of anguish.

"This—is this—incredible!" he gasped.

"Bessie, Miss Amy's maid, overheard the whole, Sir Frederick. She listened, I suppose. She said that Miss Edith came to Miss Amy's room and told her she was a dependent, and that Mr. Arthur hated her, and more stuff like that, and told her to leave the Lindens immediately. Miss Amy was heart-broken, and went on foot to the station, where she took a ticket to Lunnon. Since then, no one has seen her."

The baronet pressed his hands against his heart, as if to still its tumultuous beating.

"We think, Sir Frederick," ventured Mr. Marks, "as Miss Amy got a situation as governess, though of course we know nothing about it. Only she didn't have much money, your honour, so Bessie says, and if she's alive, she must be doing something. But she was such a delicate young lady, Sir Frederick, that I much misdoubt if she's living yet?"

Again the baronet groaned with his terrible mental suffering.

"There's not one of the tenants, Sir Frederick," continued the innkeeper, "who will be pleased with the new Lady Hamlin. But how I am rattling on, your honour, and the train going in a couple of hours. May I make so bold as to ask you how you came to be so long away?"

"Another time, Mr. Marks, another time," responded the baronet, in a low, choked voice.

The innkeeper was awed by the terrible emotion of Sir Frederick, and stole from the parlour, leaving his guest to himself.

The dinner, hastily prepared, was soon placed upon the table, but the baronet made no effort to eat. He did not even take a seat at the table.

He had pictured continually on his journey homewards the warm welcomes he would meet, and the joy his return would impart to his family—but how different was the reality!

Arthur, his noble son, was, perhaps, on the point of being entrapped into a marriage with a woman who had already a husband living, and Amy, his darling, had been driven forth from her rightful home into the hard, cold world!

It was no wonder, then, that the baronet was almost distracted with grief.

The minutes dragged like hours to his tortured mind. He paced to and fro with hurried step, inaction seeming torture, and indulged in all sorts of conjectures as to the whereabouts of Amy.

When it became time for him to go to the station, Mr. Marks made his appearance, saying:

"I have bought your ticket, Sir Frederick. Here it is. I will accompany you to the train!"

The baronet took the ticket and preceded Mr. Marks to the front of the inn, where a small crowd of his tenants had assembled, Mr. Marks having hastened to spread the marvellous news of their landlord's return to them alive and well.

Sir Frederick was greeted by them with enthusiastic cheers, and he mechanically raised his hat in acknowledgement of the honour, but he had the look of a blind man groping about in a strange place. His pale countenance ached many, and some of the tenants said that it was more like the ghost of their landlord than himself that they beheld.

The innkeeper, startled at the baronet's physical weakness, begged him to lean upon him, and he then conducted him to the station, and soon after placed him in the train.

It was late in the afternoon when Sir Frederick reached London, and he drove immediately to Hamlin House, dismissed the cab, and knocked at the door himself for admittance.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

As Edith had stated to Lionel Claremont, Amy was settled as governess in the family of Mrs. Netson. She had seen the lady's advertisement in the *Times*, had applied for the situation, had pleased by her manners and appearance; and although the salary was much smaller than that she had received from Lady Claremont, she had accepted the situation when Mrs. Netson had hastened to secure her after her interview with Edith.

On the very morning of the day when Edith Welsley and Lionel Claremont were so cruelly plotting against her, she arrived at her new home at Islington.

It was a very different one from the Claremont mansion; being simply a small and unpretending house, which was, however, dignified with the title of Elm Villa. The name was slightly incongruous, there being no elms in the vicinity. Although the servants of Elm Villa were fewer and not so well-trained as at Claremont House, and the furniture was less massive and expensive, it had a home-like air, which the stately dwelling lacked.

As Amy was admitted into the corridor, Mrs. Netson came out of a reception-room near at hand, and greeted her cordially, inviting her into the

apartment, and then ordering her luggage to be taken to her chamber.

"Your room is ready for you, Miss Vale," she said, "but you had better rest a little before you go up to it. I've been thinking of what you said about not being accustomed to the care of children out of school-hours, and have concluded that I shall not need your assistance with them except during school-hours. They have a good nurse who takes all the trouble of them."

Any expressed her satisfaction at this concession, and Mrs. Netson, who was a lively and chatty personage, continued:

"I told you in my note yesterday that I had called upon your friend, Miss Welsley. She is a sweetly pretty girl, and she spoke very handsomely of you—very handsomely indeed. I also saw the baronet, Sir Arthur Hamlin, a splendid-looking man! He reminded me of my poor dear captain. I told you that my late husband was a captain in the army, did I not?"

Any replied in the negative.

"I thought I did," said Mrs. Netson, apologetically. "He died nearly two years ago. I assure you, my dear, after I had got a little reconciled to his death, I used to feel a positive relief in thinking I should never have to worry any more about his being ordered off to India. As I was saying, Sir Arthur Hamlin reminded me of him. I wonder if he will marry Miss Welsley?"

"They are engaged to be married," said Welsley.

"What! And living in the same house!" exclaimed Mrs. Netson. "That is exceedingly improper."

"Miss Welsley is Sir Arthur's ward, and has no other home," declared Amy. "Besides, they have a big housekeeper, who chaperones Miss Welsley."

"I suppose that makes it all right," said Mrs. Netson. "I have given you a pleasant room, Miss Vale, and shall give you the privilege of receiving your company in this parlour. You can have as much company out of the school-hours as you choose. I would like Miss Welsley to come often—in fact, I'd like her for a personal friend. And now let me show you your room."

She led the way to the floor above the drawing-room, chattering gaily the while, and ushered Amy into a neat square sitting-room. It was carpeted with blue and white carpeting, and white muslin curtains shaded the windows, and were looped back with blue ribbons. In addition to the usual articles of furniture, were a set of carved book-shelves, loaded with books. In an alcove was placed a small white-draped bedstead, which was partly hidden by the white curtains that were looped away before it.

"How very pretty!" said Amy, with genuine pleasure. "I shall feel very much at home here, Mrs. Netson. My luggage is brought up, I see, and I shall soon be quite settled!"

"I hope so!" said her employer, heartily. "I am glad you like the room. My own suite of apartments are across the hall, and I put you here for company, for I sometimes get timid in the night. You will take all your meals with me. My children are always at table, for now that the poor dear captain has gone I cannot bear to sit at my empty table. I like the prattle of my children while I eat. Besides," she added, "how are they to learn manners if they are obliged to eat in the nursery?"

Any not being able to answer the question, Mrs. Netson continued:

"We won't have any teaching to-day, Miss Vale, but I'd like you to become acquainted with the children, so that you can take them in hand tomorrow. I will leave you now to unpack your trunks and dress for dinner—which I am old-fashioned enough to have at one."

She left the apartment, and Amy devoted herself to the tasks set before her.

After unpacking her trunks, and stowing away her gowns in the ample closets, she dressed herself in a neat gray dress, gave an additional touch to her glossy hair, which shone like burnished gold, and then descended to the drawing-room floor.

There she was met by a servant, who conducted her to the drawing-room, where were assembled Mrs. Netson and her children.

Amy was introduced to the little ones, and by her winning manners was soon on good terms with them all.

This fact increased the esteem her employer already felt for her, and Amy was made to feel quite at home.

The next morning her duties as governess began. She had to examine the children as to what they already knew, and what they were competent to undertake, but this task was light with such young children, and the little school was soon in full progress.

On the second day of her new life, after school hours were over, and Amy was in her own room looking over a novel she had found on one of her book-shelves, a servant knocked at her door, and announced that a woman wished to see her.

"A young lady?" asked Amy, thinking of Edith,

to whom she had written immediately after entering upon this situation.

The servant shook his head doubtfully, saying: "I think not, miss. She bade me say that she came from Miss Welsley—"

"Very well. I'll be down directly!" said Amy, flinging aside her book.

The servant departed, and Amy hastened down to the little reception-room.

She found awaiting her a woman, of rather lady-like appearance, who arose at her entrance, and handed her a note, saying:

"I come from a friend of yours, Miss Vale—I mean Miss Welsley. Be so kind as to read her note."

Amy did so.

It was from Edith, and introduced the bearer, Miss Warr, to her notice. The note went on to state that Miss Warr had called upon Edith with a pious story, demanding assistance, and stating that she lived at Islington. The writer, therefore, begged her "dear Amy" to call at the woman's address, ascertain whether her story were true, and communicate the result to Miss Welsley, that she might assist the suppliant, if deserving. The note concluded with an apology for demanding even so trifling a service, but as Amy resided at Islington, it certainly could not cause her much trouble to ascertain the truth of the story, and thus satisfy the general sympathies of her friend.

When the maiden had finished reading it, she looked up at Miss Warr, and was surprised to meet that person's gaze fixed strangely and earnestly upon her.

A single moment was sufficient for her to scrutinize her companion.

Miss Warr was a woman of middle age, of not unprepossessing appearance. There was a boldness, however, in her black eyes, a treacherous expression about her lips, and a silkiness about her manner, that would have caused a keen observer of human nature to distrust her.

Her dress was poor and scanty, and indicated the most extreme poverty, joined to an extreme neatness and an endeavour to keep up appearances. In contrast with her garments, her cheeks were plentifully ornamented with rouge and set off by a liberal quantity of pearl powder.

Although Amy was not skilled in reading physiognomy, she felt an instinctive dislike and distrust of the person before her, and carefully questioned her as to her history.

Miss Warr replied by relating such a pitiful tale that Amy's sympathies were aroused, and she said:

"I will call at your residence, Miss Warr, as Miss Welsley requests me. Indeed, if you wish, I will go home with you."

A strange gleam shot up into the woman's eyes—a gleam of triumph—but her eyelids drooped in time to conceal it from Amy.

"Thank you!" she said, in a grateful manner, that touched the maiden. "I shall never forget your kindness. It seems to me," she added, "that I have seen you before, Miss Vale. Vale—Vale! I know no one of that name, and yet your face looks familiar!"

Amy blushed, remembering that her name was assumed, and her confusion seemed to arouse some suspicion in the mind of the visitor.

"Perhaps, Miss Vale," she suggested, "I have seen you under another name, if you will pardon me saying so!"

Amy's confusion confirmed this idea in the woman's mind, and after a few minutes' thoughtful scrutiny of the maiden's face, she suddenly exclaimed:

"I have it! I certainly cannot be mistaken! Were you not the adopted daughter of the late Sir Arthur Hamlin? Were you not called Amy Hamlin?"

Amy struggled to regain her self-possession and managed to reply quietly:

"You are right, Miss Warr. But having no right to that name, I have resigned it for another!"

The woman seemed astonished and agitated at the girl's ready acknowledgment of her identity, and exclaimed:

"Do you know your history?"

"I know all that was known of it by my adopted father!"

"Then you have heard of the woman from whom Sir Frederick took you?"

"I have. And you—you know—"

The woman arose, exclaiming, excitedly:

"I am that woman, Amy!"

To describe the astonishment of the maiden on hearing this declaration would be impossible.

"You are the woman?" she ejaculated, as soon as she could speak. "How strange!"

The woman sank back into the chair from which she had arisen and surveyed Amy with a strange, eager gaze.

"You are the woman?" repeated Amy, approaching her. "Then tell me who I am. Am I your daughter?"

Miss Warr, as the woman had called herself, smiled, as she replied :

" Do we look alike ? It is not necessary for me to say that you are not my child. You can see that for yourself ! "

" Thank Heaven ! " breathed Amy. " Then, Sir Frederick Hamlin did not wrong you in taking me from you ? "

" No, " answered the woman, hesitatingly.

" And do you know who I am ? "

Miss Warr nodded.

Amy grew deadly pale, and her tone was full of pleading, as she asked :

" Who am I, then ? Oh, won't you tell me who I am ? "

The woman shook her head.

Amy pleaded long and earnestly, but elicited no satisfactory answer, and at last she said :

" Tell me, at least, if my parents are living ! Have I a father and mother ? "

After a moment's thought, Miss Warr replied :

" Your parents are both living ! "

" And shall I never see them ? Oh, I beg of you to restore me to them ! " prayed Amy. " If you only knew how lonely and desolate I am, you would have pity upon me ! "

Miss Warr did not seem to be under the influence of pity, and there was a subtle gleam in her eyes, as she said :

" When I came here to see you, I little thought of finding Amy Hamlin in Miss Vale. I recognised you from your resemblance to your mother, and from having seen you at the Lindens twice while Sir Frederick was living, and when neither you nor he knew that I was in the vicinity. I kept myself informed of your movements, and knew that you were employed in the family of Lord Claremont. I knew, too, that Lionel Claremont loved you. When I came here to-day, however, I thought that it was a new face he was in love with — "

" I don't understand you ! "

Miss Warr bit her lip, and endeavoured to correct the mistake she had made, and as Amy was unsuspicious, she succeeded.

As might have been gathered from the hint she had dropped, however, she had come to Amy on a treacherous errand. She was really in the employ of Lionel Claremont, and was the wife of Rawlins, she having been united to the valet that morning.

She had known from Rawlins that Amy was a governess in the Claremont family, but had not been made acquainted with the fact that the Miss Vale she was to entrap was Amy herself.

On making the discovery, she had been tempted to confess the girl's identity as a matter of speculation, and in the hope of a reward, but a recollection that she was Rawlins' wife and must join with him to please Lionel Claremont—in conjunction with more potent recollections—decided her to keep her secret.

She was, therefore, deaf to all Amy's entreaties.

Concealing her real intentions under a mask of hypocrisy, she observed :

" Well, Amy, go home with me now, and see how I live and how needy I am, and then—yes, I will tell you your entire history ! "

" But why not here ? "

" I will tell you nowhere save in my own home. If you are anxious to know who you are, you will come with me ! "

Amy did not hesitate long, but assented, and ran up to her room to get ready for her walk. In a few minutes she returned, and they set out for Miss Warr's home.

(To be continued.)

MERCURIAL POISONING THROUGH MILK.—Lord Nelson has just published a most interesting account of a case of poisoning by milk. Some cattle and cows in Nicaragua drank some water in which mercury had been occasionally washed ; the milk from these cows was used as an article of diet by a gentleman who, in consequence, was attacked with symptoms of mercurial poisoning. This case is exceedingly interesting, inasmuch as it shows that the mineral mercury can be transmitted from one living system to another living system, and this without losing its power. That this is the case is evident from the fact that the mercury passed through the system of the cow and found its exit by means of the milk of that animal, which was taken into the system of the man ; it then resumed its action, and brought about the same symptoms as though it had been given directly to the human being, *viz.*, salivation. We may, therefore, deduce two lessons from this : firstly, that it is possible to introduce mercury into the human system, in cases where its administration is called for, in the form of milk, a very much more " elegant formula " than blue pill or blue mercurial ointment. The second lesson is to ladies who have the management of household affairs ; it warns them to inquire into the origin of the milk which is served at the door by the London milkman, for if

the animal from which this milk is derived be not in a healthy state, then families may suffer, while the parents may possibly all the time be administering the cause of the suffering in the form of milk. In times, especially, when the foot and mouth disease still prevails, this question assumes considerable importance. There seems to be some mysterious affinity between the blood composition of the cow and that of the man. In a puzzle on theudder of a cow the great Jenner discovered a remedy for that terrible disease the small pox, and if it be possible to establish a herd of mercurial cows, the human race may again derive from this noble animal another valuable specific.

FACETIE.

THE old gentleman who spent a fortune in endeavouring to hatch colts from horse chestnuts, is now cultivating the egg plant, with the view of raising chickens from it.

A PERPLEXED tailor who had made a garment for a youth, and found himself unable to dispose of the surplus fulness which appeared when trying it on the young candidate, declared vociferously that " De ceat is goot. It is no fault de coat. De poy is too slim ! "

A SHREWD BOY.

" Harry, you ought not to throw away nice bread like that ; you may want it some day."

" Well, mother, would I stand any better chance of getting it then if I should eat it now ? "

A DECIDED (OR RATHER UNDECIDED) MYSTERY.

Traveller : " Now, sir, you don't pretend to say that you can't make room for me, sir—I'm (whispers in hotel clerk's ear) ——"

Clerk : " Beg your pardon ; thought you was only (whispers in traveller's ear). Certainly, sir, certainly ! "

" Go away, " said Muggins, " you can't stuff such nonsense down me. Six feet in his boots ! Bah ! no man as lives stands more nor two feet in his boots, and no use talking about it. Might as well tell me the man had six heads in his hat ! "

AN APOLOGY.—A miller had his neighbour arrested upon the charge of stealing wheat from his mill, but being unable to prove the charge, the court adjudged that the plaintiff should apologise to the accused. " Well, " said he, " I've had you arrested for stealing my wheat. I can't prove it, and I am sorry for it. "

AN urchin, not quite three years old, said to his sister, while munching a piece of gingerbread : " Siss, take half of die cake to keep to afternoon, when I get cross. " This is nearly as good as the story of the child who fell from the top of the stairs : " Ma, Hannah won't pacify me ! "

WIDE AWAKE.

It was in Dublin city that a good-humoured maid-of-all-work, Molly, once related to her young mistress a marvellous dream she had the night before.

" Pooh ! pooh ! " cried the latter at its conclusion, " you must have been asleep, Molly, when you dreamed such nonsense. "

" Indeed, I was not, then ! " replied the indignant Molly, " I was just as wide awake as I am this minute ! "

A GIRL of the period went to the theatre and two parties in one evening, carried on three flirtations at each, and the next day refused three offers of marriage, accepted two, and broke off three previous engagements, read four novels, wrote two letters and one hundred notes of invitation, practised her music lesson, made herself a new veil, ate breakfast, lunch, and dinner enough for two, rode to the Park with one of her lovers, and walked home with the other.

A REPARTEE OF LEIGH HUNT.—Leigh Hunt had an uncle who was very wealthy and middle-aged. Everyone knows what an idler poor Leigh was in his youth, and how very improvident in money matters. His old uncle came to see him one day, and said : " Ah, Leigh ! how do you do, Leigh ? What are you doing now, Leigh ? " " I am not doing anything, " answered Hunt. " What ! " exclaimed the other, " haven't you got anything to do yet ? " " No ; but as you don't seem to mind your own business, you ought to employ me to do it for you. That would keep me pretty well engaged, I fancy. "

SHARP PRACTICE.—A lawyer once had an important case, and the decision depended on the way the jury would regard the testimony of one lady. He lost the case because the fair witness swore positively to an occurrence which she witnessed at the distance of several rods, although there were several persons who stood much nearer than she that saw nothing whatever of it. The lawyer looked rather blue when the jury brought in their verdict, but he revenged himself by rising and telling the court a story of a lady he once knew who was very

near-sighted, but who always declared her eyesight to be excellent. Accordingly, one day a neighbour stuck a darning-needle in the side of the barn, and, placing her on the opposite side of the road, asked her if she could see it. " Oh ! yes, " replied the old lady, " I can see the needle easy enough, but where's the barn ? "

A GENTLEMAN passing through one of the public offices, was affronted by some clerks, and was advised to complain to the principal, which he did thus :— " I have been insulted here by some of the fellows in this place, and have come to acquaint you of it, as I understand you are the principal. "

SOMEBODY says there are two kinds of family jars ; into one you put your sweetmeats, into the other you put—your foot.

GOOD ROADS.

An Englishman having asked a son of Erin if the roads in Ireland were good, received this reply.

" Yes ; they are so fine that I wonder you do not import some of them into England. Let me see, there is the road to love, strewed with roses ; to matrimony, through nettles ; to honour, through the camp ; to prison, through the law ; and to the undertakers, through physic. "

" Have you any road to preferment ? " asked the Englishman.

" Yes, faith, we have, but that is the dirtiest road in the kingdom. "

MILK AND WATER.—We see announced in a contemporary the establishment of a " Milkman's Total Abstinence Society." This looks bad for their customers, for they were pretty well addicted to water before, and if they stick to it altogether, London milk may as well " walk its chalks " altogether.—*Fun.*

WANTED A MINISTRY.

The King of Italy can't get a Ministry.

After extrusting the task of forming an Administration to Lanza and Cialdini, who have both given it up as a bad job, he has fallen back on Sella. Let us hope Sella may prove the saddle on the right horse.

But what Italy wants is not so much a saddle as a rider. What with a king who neither reigns nor governs, and Ministers who sit loose, and use the curb injudiciously, and show a thorough want of bridle hand, no wonder the result should be staggers, stumbles, and tumbles, with fits of buck-jumping, and kicking, and backing—far less due to the bad temper or bad blood of the horse than to the bad horsemanship of those allowed to get on his back.—*Punch.*

THE FESTIVE SEASON.

DEAR PUNCH,

Look here, what the *Law Times* is so good as to remind us of concerning this January :

" The whole of the year's tax must be paid in advance, instead of being collected half-yearly as hitherto. The Income-Tax is to be collected in like manner, the whole year's tax to be paid at once in the same month of January, already severely burdened by the compulsory payment in advance of the assessed taxes. "

A festive prospect this is for the festive season ! The Egyptians used to show a skeleton at their feasts, so as to prevent an exuberance of jollity. So we easily may curb our merriment this Christmas by hanging with the mistletoe a little shoal of taxpayers. " *Harlequin Exchequer, or the Demon Tax-Collector!* " would certainly this year be a fit title for a pantomime. Well, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year ; and, by way of a Happy Thought, you had better begin to think about the coming New Year's visit of the tax-gatherer.

Believe me, dear old boy, yours in sympathy,

A SUFFERER.—*Punch.*

ON THE FACE OF IT.

Pretty Teacher : " Now, Johnny Wells, can you tell me what is meant by a miracle ? "

Johnny : " Yes, teacher. Mother says if you don't marry now Parson, 'twull be a murracle ! "—*Punch.*

HOW TO CUT YOUR CORN.

Sharp Nephew : " Couldn't get your harvest in, uncle ? Ah ! if you'd only written to me now, I'd have put you up to a machine that would have cut your corn in no time. "

Uncle : " Machine, eh ? What ? "

Sharp Nephew : " Why, a chiropodist, of course. "

Uncle : " No ! thank'ee, Fred. None o' your new-fangled steam affairs for me. "—*Will-o'-the-Wisp.*

A CONCLUSIVE REASON.—*Sarah's Lover* (sq.)— " Sarey ! if you don't want to see me in the Life Guards a-going on anyhow, and a courtin' all the gals in Lunnon, say you'll ha' me—say you'll ha' me ! "—*Will-o'-the-Wisp.* *

HOW AN OLD LADY GOT A FREE RIDE.—The conductor of a City omnibus thus tells how his cash was stolen one day the fare of one passenger : " All paid except one fat old lady, who sat next the door, and who seemed to be reaching down as if to get

something she had dropped on the floor. When her time came to pay she raised her head, and thus addressed the blushing youth: 'I allors, when I travels, carry my money in my stockin', for yea sees nothin' can get at it thar, and I'd thank you, young man, just to reach it for me. I'm so jammed in that I can't get to it.' The youth looked at the other passengers, some of whom were laughing at his plight; one or two young ladies among them blushed scarlet, and he beat a sudden retreat, muttering something about not charging old ladies, etc.'

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

PETROLEUM oil, such as is used for lamps, is an effectual preventive against the destructive propensity of worms in timber. The timber is to be washed over with it.

CHURNING FOR BREAKFAST.—Paris has a new invention. It is a portable fresh butter churn, to be used at table each meal. It is made of crystal, and mounted on silver feet. A silver rod revolves quickly in the cream, and presents a pat of butter every three minutes.

FOR COLDS AND COUGHS.—A strong tea of elder-flowers, sweetened with honey, either fresh or dried, which may be bought at any herb shop. A basin of this tea is to be drank as hot as possible after the person is warm in bed; it produces a strong perspiration, and a slight cold or cough yields to it immediately; but the most stubborn requires two or three repetitions. Used in Russia.

The following is a Turkish recipe for a cement used to fasten diamonds and other precious stones to metallic surfaces, and which is said to be capable of strongly uniting surfaces of polished steel, even when exposed to moisture. It is as follows:—Dissolve five or six bits of gum mastic, each the size of a large pea, in as much spirits of wine as will suffice to render it liquid. In another vessel dissolve in brandy as much isinglass, previously softened in water, as will make a two-ounce phial of strong glue, adding two small bits of gum ammoniac, which must be rubbed until dissolved. Then mix the whole with heat. Keep in a phial closely stopped. When it is to be used set the phial in boiling water.

The material generally used by watchmakers on the Continent for polishing hard and soft steel, as well as brass, is a white substance called wiener-kalk; it polishes much quicker than crocus, and with a beautiful black gloss. It is used in the following manner:—The piece to be polished is first put on a piece of cork fastened in the vice and rubbed with a piece of plate glass, on which is put a little oil and oilstone dust, till it is perfectly flat and all the file marks have disappeared. It is then cleaned with a brush and soap and water, and dipped in spirits of wine, and, after being dried with a clean cloth, put on another clean piece of cork, in the same manner as before, and rubbed briskly with a flat polisher, made either of bell-metal or block tin, in which is put a little wiener-kalk, and fine oil, mixed to the consistency of a thick paste. It is necessary to prevent any dust getting in the polishing stuff or on the piece to be polished. Wiener-kalk can be had at any watchmakers' tools and materials warehouse under the name of diamantine.

A LADY who was somewhat of an historical personage recently died in Ireland, namely, Pamela, daughter of the unfortunate Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Her mother, the more famous "Pamela," was the reputed daughter of Madame de Genlis and the Duke of Orleans (Egalité). The Pamela, who was one of the three children of Lord and Lady Edward Fitzgerald, and who has recently died in Ireland, was the widow of Sir Guy Campbell, Bart.

FOUL AIR.—The recent death of Mr. Justice Hayes is attributed in a large degree to the fact that he had been breathing all day the pestiferous atmosphere of the court. That breathing a close and impure atmosphere may be the immediate exciting cause of cerebral hemorrhage, is certain. The blood, imperfectly aerated, and charged with the exhalations from numerous lungs breathing the same atmosphere, is impeded in its passage through the minute arteries, whose muscular walls contract and hinder its progress. Hence the sense of fulness, pain, and throbbing in the head, while the heart beats with increased force to overcome the impediment and to drive on the blood. If heart and blood-vessels are sound and strong, the inconvenience is temporary, and fresh air acts as a quick restorative. If the heart is weak, faintness may result from a defective circulation through the brain; and, on the other hand, if the arteries which supply the brain have weak and brittle walls, the increased strain to which they are subjected while the heart is beating with unusual energy to force the blood through the

minute arteries which dispute its passage, may result in the rupture of a vessel, and consequent hemorrhage into the brain. That this happened in the case of Mr. Justice Hayes is certain, and that the exciting cause was "the pestiferous atmosphere of the court" is highly probable.

THE NORTHERN FARMER.

From Tennyson's new Volume, "The Holy Grail and other Poems," we extract the following:

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as been a-talkin' o' thee;
Thon's been talkin to muther, an' she been a tellin' it me.
Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—
No—thou'll marry fur luvv—an' we boath on us thinks tha an ass.
Seal'd her to day go by—Saaint's-daily—they was ringing the bells.
She's a beauty thou thinks—an' so ill is scours o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the flower as blows.
But propuity, propuity sticks, an' propuity, propuity grows.
Doant be stunt*; take time; I knows what maikes tha sa mad.
Warr's I craized fur the lasses myson when I warr a lad?
But I know'd a Quaker seller as often 'as towd me this:
Doain't thou marry for munny, but goa wheer munny is!
An' I went wheer munny war; an' thy muther coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laide by, an' a nicestish bit o' land.
Mailybe she warn't a beauty;—I never giv it a thowt—
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?
Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weant a nowt when 'e's dead,
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summert, and addle† her bread:
Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' 'e's never giv it a nowt higher;
An' 'e made the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shire.
And thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,
Stock to his taal they did, an' 'e's 'ant got shut on 'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noin to lend 'im a shove,
Worse nor a far-welter'd yavo; fur, Sammy, 'e married for luvv.
Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maakin' 'em goa together, as they've good right to do.
Coudn't I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laide by?
Nahy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it; reäson why.
• Obstinate. † Earn. ‡ Or fow-welter'd; said of a sheep lying on its back in a furrow.

GEMS.

LIFE is a beautiful night, in which, as some stars go down, others rise.

TRUE goodness is like the glowworm; it shines most when no eyes, except those of Heaven, are upon it.

DISTRUST all those who love you extremely upon a very slight acquaintance and without any visible reason.

If a man be gracious to strangers, it shows he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island cut off from other lands, but a continent that joins them.

ALL the good things of this world are no further good to us than as they are of use; and whatever we may heap up to give others, we enjoy only as much as we can use, and no more.

STATISTICS.

PRODUCT OF LEAD AND SILVER.—The quantity of lead ore raised and sold in the United Kingdom was 78,944 tons in 1848, but since 1850 it has almost ranged between 90,000 tons and 100,000 tons in the year; in 1868 it was 95,236 tons, of the value of £1,150,768, the price at the Holywell sales averaging 12*l.* 8*d.*, or about 16*s.* lower than in 1867.

The quantity of lead obtained from the ore was 53,373 tons in 1848, but in 1868 it reached 71,017 tons, of the value of £1,378,404. In 1848 it took 147.9 tons of ore to make 100 tons of lead, but the required quantity has been reduced since then, and in 1868 it took only 134.1 tons, or, in other terms, there were 74,568 tons of lead in 100 tons of ore. The quantity of silver produced was but 496,475oz. in 1853; it had risen to 569,345oz. in 1858, and reached 841,328oz. in 1868, of the value of £281,365. In 1853 there were obtained 8,143oz. of silver from the ton of lead; in 1858 8,336oz.; in 1868 11,846oz. From the ore produce of lead-mines in Cornwall there were obtained in 1868 6,310 tons of lead and 303,030oz. of silver; from Durham and Northumberland, 17,805 tons of lead and 81,447oz. of silver; from Yorkshire, 5,655 tons of lead and 2,500oz. of silver; from Derbyshire, 4,396 tons of lead and 1,150oz. of silver; from Cumberland, 4,097 tons of lead and 33,057oz. of silver; from Shropshire, 3,823 tons of lead; from Westmoreland, 1,388 tons of lead and 21,314oz. of silver; from Devonshire, 1,141 tons of lead and 39,855oz. of silver. In Wales Denbighshire in 1868 supplied 6,382 tons of lead and 33,370oz. of silver; Cardiganshire, 5,414 tons of lead and 67,502oz. of silver; Flintshire, 8,255 tons of lead and 29,808oz. of silver; Montgomeryshire, 3,050 tons of lead and 19,546oz. of silver. The supply in Scotland is chiefly from Dumfriesshire. In Ireland, Wicklow produced 1,324 tons of lead and 13,245oz. of silver; Tipperary, 31 tons of lead and 1,127oz. of silver; Waterford, 150 tons of lead; and Louth, 53 tons. The totals for Scotland in 1868 were 2,437 tons of lead ore, 1,812 tons of lead, 8,201oz. of silver: all these are smaller quantities than in the preceding year. The totals for Ireland in 1868 are 2,089 tons of ore, 1,562 tons of lead, 14,372oz. of silver; all these are larger quantities than in the preceding year, but there are returns from more mines in 1868. The Isle of Man supplied in 1868 4,290 tons of lead ore, 3,089 tons of lead, 178,718oz. of silver.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A CHINAMAN recently carried off the prize for ploughing at the Oregon State Fair.

The Columbia Market is likely to be converted into a wholesale fish market, thus diverting the fish supplies of the eastern coast from Billingsgate, and somewhat relieving the over-pressure there.

PENNY hot dinners have been established in London. Australian meat, with bread, is the fare, and there is every prospect that the enterprise, in poor neighbourhoods, will be successful. The first establishment of this kind, in Norton Folgate, is extensively patronised.

In a late violent gale, the day mail train from Chatham to New York was blown from the track by the power of the wind, and the entire train thrown down a steep embankment, the locomotive only remaining on the track. The baggage, mail, and express cars were entirely destroyed by fire, together with the mails, baggage, and express packages. Several passengers were seriously injured and one was instantly killed.

In an action for damages for injuries received by the wife of a Bermondsey publican in the collision at New-cross in June last, by consent, a verdict for £1,200. has been recorded. In another case, the wife of a licensed victualler, having been seriously hurt in the same collision, was awarded £80. About 300 claims have been made upon the Brighton Railway Company in respect of this accident!

THE workmen who take advantage of the cheap trains which have been started from Hammersmith and its neighbourhood to the City, are bound by an inscription on their tickets not to sue for damages in the event of accidents, but to submit their claims to arbitration—the award of the arbitration not to exceed 100*s.* in any case. This seems to be a most ingenious plan for enabling railway companies to maim and kill necessitous passengers at reduced rates.

DAYS of rain are more numerous in high than in low latitudes. The heaviest fall of rain on our globe takes place on the Khasia Hills, to the north-west of Calcutta, and amounts to 600in. annually. It rarely or never rains on the coast of Peru, in the great valley of the River Columbia, in that of the Colorado in North America, the Sahara in Africa, and the desert of Gobi in Asia, while in Patagonia and Chile it rains almost every day.

THE QUICKEST PASSAGE FROM AMERICA ON RECORD.—The Inman steam-ship City of Brussels, Captain James Kennedy, from New York, has just made the run across from port to port in the extraordinary short space of eight days fourteen hours and fourteen minutes, the fastest passage ever made. The run to Queenstown was accomplished in seven days twenty-two hours and three minutes.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. W. DODD was replied to in No. 343.

MAT. R.—The handwriting is ordinarily good.

MISS LESLIE's communication has been received.

A. CARPENTER.—The handwriting is excellent.

A. B. C.—Such an officer is not entitled to a superannuation allowance from Government.

C. LANGLEY.—There is no charge made. The handwriting is legible, but it is far from being neat or nice.

LOUIS ROBINSON.—The writing is pretty good, though somewhat careless.

H. DANVERS.—The writing and your communication are both characterised by carelessness.

E. J. DE LA POE.—The letter was duly acknowledged in a recent number.

ALEXANDER P.—There is considerable thought and feeling in the lines, and we insert them with pleasure.

A CONSTANT READER.—We recommend you to do nothing to the scars beyond applying to them a little cold cream occasionally.

WAUBAN.—Your qualifications being such as you describe, all that you require is an introduction by some influential friend.

VICTORIA.—The wishes expressed in your lines are characterised by so much ecstasy as to detract from their genuineness, and the construction of the verses is likewise faulty.

MINSTREL.—Burnt cork and cold cream are the materials used. Anoint the face with the cold cream, and then apply the burnt cork, having first reduced it to the finest possible powder.

ARTEMUS.—Rub the inside of the skins with some strong alcoholic spirit, with which you might mix some corrosive sublimate. You must use the latter ingredient with great care, as it is poisonous.

ROBERT PATERSON.—Two numbers of THE LONDON READER may be forwarded through the post-office for one penny postage. The handwriting is only moderately good, and the orthography needs improvement.

E. W. L. L.—The lines evince capability, and furnish ground for hope that the author might produce something suitable for publication. The specimen forwarded to us could have been relieved of much of its crudeness by an earnest, patient, and studious revision.

JANET.—You do not state whether your tortoise is a land or sea tortoise. If the former, its natural food is chiefly vegetable substances—leaves of plants, fallen and decayed fruit, and various kinds of fungi. Water tortoises feed upon dead fish, or other animal matter.

CHARLES BRAY is thanked for his observations concerning the nests built by sparrows in sheds to preserve them from the winter's cold. The handwriting is tolerable. It would not be possible to make improvement in a formed style without great and laborious practice.

FANNY.—Such a position as you have described is one full of difficulty. It is impossible for a stranger to do more than advise you to summon to your aid as much assistance as you can command, and, upon the very next occasion that the ill-treatment is repeated, to lay your complaint before a magistrate.

BESS.—The plot of Scott's novel, "The Fortunes of Nigel," is laid in the time of James I. of England. "Peril of the Peak" contains many incidents relating to the court of the second Charles; and "Waverley" itself often refers to the reverend, who was the cause of some troubles in the reign of Anne, the last of the Stuarts. The handwriting is very good.

MAUD.—The change which has taken place in the hair is probably the result of some constitutional disturbance in your system, which may be temporary or otherwise. You should have your hair often dressed and cut, and pay the best attention you can to your health. The handwriting, though not neat, is distinct and good. It is quite suitable for the occupation to which you allude.

F. P.—As you use the words, "administrator to your husband's will," we presume that he died intestate, and that you wish to become the administratrix of his estate. You can do so. The expense will, probably, not exceed five guineas. As his widow, if there are children, one-third of the property will belong to you, and two-thirds to the children. If no children, one-half to you and one-half to the intestate's next of kin.

J. W.—If the protection order obtained by the mother was properly registered, it would be unnecessary to obtain the certificate of the father's death. The order protected her after-acquired property, and her children would take through her. The County Courts have now power to enquire into a distributive share of personal

estate under an intestacy; they have also an equitable jurisdiction. If the amount is important to you, you could seek for it in that way.

F. B.—For a proper representation of Aurora, the under-dress should be of carmine blue, ornamented with silver stars. This should be surmounted by two tunics of different length, the lower one white, the upper rose-coloured. The materials should be of the thinnest gauze, and transparent, with bouffons to represent the clouds of early morning, tinged with the rising sun. The hair should be dishevelled, waving in light masses capable of being displaced by the slightest breeze. Stars are the most appropriate ornaments, but, if flowers be used, they should be in bud, in token that they await the arrival of the sun to expand them into bloom.

F. B.—To paint on glass, the design must first be drawn on paper. Lay the glass upon the design and trace the outline on the glass with a mixture of fusible glass, coloured with a metallic oxide and finely ground in oil of tar. The parts are then coated, according to the tint required, with a mixture composed of an alloy of silver and antimony ground up with red oxide. The glass is next fired or subjected to a great heat. Other colours are then added, and the glass is again fired. The process can only be performed by skilled workers.

CONSTANT READER (Newport).—You are ingeniously constructing for yourself a nice little nest to harbour a whole brood of hornets, which, on one fine day, will sting you to your worst enemy's entire content. Therefore desist. Break off the connection. Be sufficiently resolute to leave the neighbourhood if necessary. A sharp, deep cut is the only prescription that can properly be given in such a case. An Atlas could not bear the burden you would faint carry. A Hercules would succumb under such a difficulty.

G. Y.—It does not appear that your position would be much improved, even if you were successful in obtaining the divorce for which you are anxious to petition. If your prayer were granted, it would be your duty to provide entirely for the maintenance of the children. But your letter is worded as if you had deserted your wife in the first instance. However, you can petition in *forma pauperis*, by making an affidavit that you have no means, and by obtaining the written opinion of counsel that you have a reasonable cause to petition. Possibly ten guineas would cover these preliminary expenses.

SERENADE.

All the earth is wrapt in shadows,
And the dews have drenched the meadows,
And the moon has taken her station,
And the midnight rules creation;
Where is my beloved staying?

In her chamber, kneeling, praying.

Is she praying for her lover?
Then her heart is flowing over;
My beloved! is she keeping
Watch, or is she sweetly sleeping?
If she dream, her dreams are surely
Of the ones she loves so purely.
If she sleep not, if she pray not,
It to listening ear she say nought;
Thought with thought in silence linking,
Oh! I know of whom she's thinking:
Think, oh, think, of me, sweet angel!
Rose of life, and love's evangel!

All the thoughts that melt or move thee
Are like stars that shine above thee.
And while shining, to the centre
Of thy spirit's spirit enter,
And there light a flame supernal,
Like eternal love, eternal.

A YOUNG AMERICAN LADY.—The South American mails leave England about four times a month. As the post-office occasionally changes the dates of departure, before writing you had better make inquiry about the time for posting letters at the post-office nearest to you. The postmaster will give you every information. The course of post to Santa Marta is about six weeks out and home. The steamers stop both at Santa Marta and Cartagena. Bogota is many miles inland, and the journey thither from the ports would occupy some time. For it special arrangements would have to be made. We are not acquainted with the French company. The handwriting is plain and distinct.

LEFT BLOOMING ALONE.—You should send your address in confidence, and the advertisement should contain descriptive particulars. It is beyond our ken to determine character either by an individual's *carte de visite* or handwriting. Temperament and education have such great influence over the intellectual faculties that it would be indeed rash to judge from appearances. It is true that a portrait generally creates a prejudice for or against the living one of whom it is the resemblance, but the impulse to like or dislike is very far removed from the ability to form a serious judgment of character, into which many weighty considerations necessarily enter. If you are curious to know the impression which the dictation of your epistle has made upon our imagination, we may add that the writer seems to labour under the discomfit of a procrastinating indecision.

A CONSTANT READER.—The handwriting is good. To construct an *Æolian* harp, make a thin wooden box of the length of the window in which it is intended to be placed. Let it be five inches deep and six inches broad.

Glue on to it, at the extremities of the top, two pieces of wood, each half-an-inch high and a quarter of an inch thick, and within glue two pieces, about an inch square and as long as the box is wide. Into one of these bridges fix as many pegs as there are to be strings, and into the other fasten as many small brass pins, to which attach one end of the strings. Then string the instrument with catgut, fixing one end of it and twisting the other end round the opposite peg; do not draw the strings too tight and tune them in unison. To procure a proper passage for the wind, a thin board supported by pegs is placed over the strings. The instrument must be exposed to the wind at a window partly open, and the door of the room or an opposite window should also be kept open.

C. F. (a mechanic), 5 ft. 10 in., and good looking. Respondent must be tall, dark, affectionate, and domesticated.

W. T. B. (a seaman in the navy), twenty-three, dark, good tempered, and good looking. Respondent must be about twenty-two, fair, good looking, and fond of home.

G. R., twenty, dark, loving disposition, and has good prospects. Respondent must be of medium height, good looking, and well connected.

L. S., twenty-one, tall, good looking, and has a tolerable income. Respondent must be about twenty-one, good looking, and able to become a loving wife.

ROSEAN, eighteen, tall, dark, and affectionate. Respondent must be tall and dark; a clerk preferred.

LONELY NELLIE, nineteen, tall, domesticated, and good looking. Respondent must be respectable young gentleman in business.

KIMO, twenty-two, medium height, dark, and in business for himself. Respondent must be between sixteen and twenty, medium height, dark, and sound education; a London tradesman's daughter preferred. Wishes for a career.

GUY, twenty-three, 6 ft. 1 in., dark brown hair, eyes, whiskers, and moustache. Respondent must be about nineteen, medium height, dark, and of High Church principles.

ALONZO, twenty-six, tall, fair, and good looking, in business for himself, and with an income of 3000 a-year. Respondent must be good looking, and musical.

LOU, nineteen, medium height, good looking, and lively. Respondent should be tall, dark, and a farmer.

LIZZIE, seventeen, medium height, light hair, brown eyes, good tempered, good looking, and has a small income. Respondent must be a sailor, and forward his career.

KATE, twenty-five, medium height, dark, hazel eyes, and of a lively disposition. Respondent must be from thirty to thirty-five, and fair; a gamester preferred.

EMILY, twenty-one, medium height, fair, light blue eyes, of a slender and graceful figure, and domesticated. Respondent must be from twenty-six to twenty-eight, dark, and with black whiskers; a commercial traveller preferred.

JULIA ANNIE, seventeen, medium height, dark brown hair, dark blue eyes, good looking, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be rather tall, handsome, and dark; a clerk with an income of 1000 a-year preferred.

EDITH and POLLY.—"Edith," twenty-one, dark, medium height, and good looking. Respondent must be about twenty-six, tall, and fair; a leather-dresser preferred; *carte de visite* exchanged. "Polly," twenty, fair, short, and good looking. Respondent must be about twenty-four, steady, and dark.

KATE and POLLY (friends).—"Kate," twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and good looking. Respondent must be tall and very dark, with a good salary, and not over twenty-six. "Polly," eighteen, dark brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home, with a loving heart. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, and worthy of woman's love. Money no object.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

TONY BOWLINE is responded to by—"Maud Mary," nineteen, fair, of a loving disposition, and a nice singer.

CECIL B. O'CONNOR is responded to by—"Edith," eighteen, medium height, dark, and accomplished. *Carte de visite* exchanged; "Lottie," twenty-three, tall, dark, good tempered, and has good expectations. Would like to exchange *carte de visite* with—"G. K.," twenty-four, good disposition, and respectfully connected; "Dark-eyed Nell," twenty-one, medium height, respectfully connected, and domesticated; and—"Annie," nineteen, accomplished, highly connected, and has pretty brown hair.

RALPH and HARRY by—"Amy and Ada," (sisters) medium height, dark, handsome, and will have 5000 each on their wedding-day; "Annie and Kate," (sisters); Annie prefers Ralph; Kate prefers Harry; Annie is a brunnette; Kate is a blonde; both are well connected, amiable, lively, and pretty; "Nellie," nineteen, long brown hair, dark gray eyes, fair, domesticated, and fond of music; and—"Ursula," seventeen, fair, brown curly hair, blue eyes, good figure, and domesticated. Nellie and Ursula are sisters.

WHITE ROSE by—"Happy Jack" (a sailor), twenty-five, 5 ft. 7 in., black hair, moustache, and whiskers, good looking, loving, and steady.

H. W. B. by—"Amy Ellsmere," medium height, blue eyes, and curly auburn hair; would like to exchange *carte de visite*.

J. H. by—"A Sergeant's Daughter," tall, dark, can cook a dinner, and act the lady if required.

W. H. by—"E. G.," dark, good looking, lively, has a gentle heart, and is fond of home; and—"L. F.," twenty-six, dark, good looking, loving, and domesticated; wishes to exchange *carte de visite*.

G. A. W. H. has omitted to mention the name of the lady to whom he responds.

THURS., who is responded to by "J. Douglas," would like a personal interview, if he would appoint time and place.

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Also the TITLE and INDEX TO VOL. XIII. PRICE ONE PENNY.

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London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by J. WATSON.